Anti-Bullying Policy

The Cottesloe School

Policy Type:	Statutory (as part of Behaviour Management)
Reviewed by:	Mr S Jones (Headteacher), Ms A McKenna (Link Governor), Ms C Stirk (Policies Governor) and Mr R Henry (Assistant Headteacher - Student Character)
Date:	September 2023
Approved by:	Resources and People Committee: 14 November 2023
Last reviewed:	March 2020
Next review:	September 2024

1. Aims

The Cottesloe School is committed to providing a safe and inclusive environment where all students can learn and thrive. We recognise the serious impact that bullying can have on individuals and the overall school community. This anti-bullying policy outlines our commitment to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour, promoting respect and empathy, and supporting those who have been affected by bullying. It aims to embed a culture that promotes open communication between all parties, along with an ethos that emphasises that bullying, of any kind, is not welcome nor tolerated at The Cottesloe School.

2. Definition

Bullying is unwanted, harmful behaviour (physical and/or emotional) among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be. Bullying can be deliberate or unintentional, on the part of the bully. It may be perpetrated by individuals or by groups of pupils. Bullying differs from 'friendship fall-out', or other aggressive behaviour (usually one-off incidents).

3. Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on legislation and guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and other relevant bodies, including:

Preventing and tackling bullying - GOV.UK
Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff - GOV.UK
Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying - GOV.UK
Discrimination: your rights - https://www.gov.uk/discrimination
Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff 2022
Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK
Education and Inspections Act 2006

4. School Commitment

In order to prevent and combat bullying, the Cottesloe School takes a whole school approach and makes every effort to:

- know the students we teach or come into contact with outside the classroom.
- be aware of the various forms of bullying.
- be alert to the signs that bullying may be taking place.
- supervise key areas around the school where bullying is likely to take place.
- create and maintain a caring attitude which encourages the victims of bullying, witnesses to incidents and students in general to speak out.
- deal appropriately with situations as they arise using clearly defined procedures for investigation of incidents.
- keep detailed records of incidents.
- support and counsel both the victim and the bully.
- emphasise prevention by using a variety of means to communicate the messages about bullying to students, parents and staff.
- communicate our values, beliefs and actions to all concerned.
- participate in training events and learn from examples of good practice either from colleagues within the school or from other schools.
- engage with the healthy relationship agenda.
- provide Internet security, online filtering and monitoring and ICT education.
- ensure that governors monitor and evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of this policy.

5. Guidelines for Staff

All members of staff should:

- be alert, observe the social relationships of the students in tutor groups etc.
- not turn a blind eye to any incident whilst on duty or merely walking through the school.
- be aware of tell-tale signs such as absenteeism, under-achievement, emotional outbursts, frequent reporting to the medical room, withdrawal from social time with other students or from participation in PE.
- treat all incidents seriously.
- listen to students' points of view by developing their confidence in discussing problems.
- follow the agreed procedure for responding to incidents.
- show that you have a committed position on bullying by following up incidents.
- ensure that any perceived racist, sexist or homophobic or other prejudiced-based and discriminatory bullying incidents are reported to the student's Head of Year (HOY) so that it can logged appropriately on the serious incidents log.

6. Guidance for Parents and Carers

We ask our parents to support their children and The Cottesloe School by:

- Working in partnership with the school in order that high standards of behaviour are maintained both in and out of school.
- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be evidence of bullying (see 'Signs and Symptoms' below).
- Advising their children to report any bullying and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other pupils.
- Advising their children not to retaliate violently to any forms of bullying.
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken.
- Cooperating with the school, if their children are accused of bullying, to try to ascertain the truth.

- Pointing out the implications of bullying, both for the children who are bullied and for the bullies themselves.

7. Guidance for Students

We expect our students to:

- Take full responsibility for their own behaviour.
- Ensure that they are considerate towards one another and respectful of each other's differences.
- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying.
- Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying.

Anyone who becomes the target of bullies should not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out, to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets.

8. Reporting Concerns

Reporting a bullying concern promptly is vital in order for support and intervention to be implemented. Reporting a concern can be done in a number of ways, these include:

- A student speaking to any member of staff at The Cottesloe School. However, students may feel more comfortable speaking to their Tutor or Head of Year.
- Using the 'share it' button on the school website.
- Using the 'drop in' sessions at Team Hub at break and lunchtime.
- A student speaking to one of the school's Wellbeing Ambassadors.
- Parents/carers emailing the relevant Head of Year and/or Tutor.
- Arranging a face to face meeting with the relevant Head of Year.
- Contacting the school by phone.

9. Bullying can be:

- Emotional: Hurting people's feelings, leaving people out, making threats, spreading rumours.
- Physical: Punching, kicking, spitting, hitting, pushing.
- Verbal: Teasing, name calling, use of derogatory language (including racist and homophobic language).
- Written: Writing letters, notes, graffiti.
- Cyber: Saying unkind and threatening things by text, email and on the internet.

10. Signs and symptoms of bullying

Emotional and behavioural signs of bullying, such as:

- Changes in sleep patterns
- Changes in eating patterns
- Frequent tears or anger
- Mood swings
- Feels ill in the morning
- Becomes withdrawn or starts stammering
- Becomes aggressive and unreasonable
- Refuses to talk about what is wrong
- Begins to target siblings
- Continually 'loses' money or starts stealing

Physical signs of bullying, such as:

- Has unexplained bruises, cuts, scratches
- Comes home with missing or damaged belongings or clothes
- Comes home hungry

School related signs of bullying, such as:

- Reluctance or refusal to go to school
- Changes their route to school or are frightened of walking to school
- Does not want to go to school on the bus/tram/train
- School grades begin to fall

Other signs of bullying - sometimes signs of bullying can be far more hidden - they can include:

- Often alone or excluded from friendship groups at school.
- A frequent target for teasing, mimicking or ridicule at school.
- Unable to speak up in class and appears insecure or frightened.

11. What does not constitute Bullying?

When talking about bullying, it is very important for students, teachers, and parents to understand what does not constitute bullying. Many times, a single act or behaviour is hurtful, but it is not considered bullying. This is because the steps taken to deal with bullying behaviour is different from the way we overcome other hurtful acts.

Examples of acts that may not be bullying include:

- Disliking someone
- Attempting to have students behave in a certain way
- A single act of telling a joke about someone
- Arguments
- Expression of unpleasant thoughts or feelings regarding others
- Isolated acts of harassment, aggressive behaviour, intimidation or meanness

12. Cyber Bullying

Cyberbullying is becoming increasingly common. Unlike other types of bullying, it can happen anytime and anywhere – a child can be bullied when you might think they are safe, e.g. when they are alone in their bedroom but it can feel as if there is no escape.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance defines cyberbullying as 'when a person or group of people uses things like the internet and mobile phones to threaten, tease or upset someone else'.

Children may know who is bullying them online or they may be targeted by someone using a fake or anonymous account.

Cyberbullying includes:
- sending threatening or abusive text messages
- prejudice-based bullying, such as homophobia, racism and sexism
- making silent, hoax or abusive calls
- creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos.
- 'trolling' - the sending of menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
- excluding children from online games, activities or friendship groups
- setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child
- encouraging young people to self-harm
- voting for or against someone in an abusive poll
- creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name
- sending explicit messages (nudes)
- pressuring children into sending sexual images or engaging in sexual conversations.

All bullying issues, whatever their nature, will be treated with equal importance and the response will be based upon the guidelines in the policy.

13. Signs and Symptoms of Cyberbullying:

A student being bullied may not know that help is available or may feel too embarrassed to speak up. With the amount of time young people are spending on the internet or on their phones, it is important to be able to spot the signs of bullying. These may include:

- becoming shy or withdrawn
- refusing to go to school, youth club or any other activity
- doing less well at their schoolwork
- changes in their mood – becoming depressed, angry, unhappy
- changes in their behaviour, for example wetting the bed
- showing aggression at home with siblings and other family
- feeling anxious
- changes in sleeping and eating habits
- changes in friendships/friendship groups
- getting more headaches, stomach aches and other minor illnesses
- changes in behaviour/routines
- suddenly stopping using technology or particular sites/apps/games
- being nervous or jumpy around technology, for example, when a mobile receives a message
- spending excessive amounts of time on devices connected to the internet
- hiding internet usage, using internet connected devices secretly, deliberately keeping out of sight when connected online
- displaying anxiety when kept away from devices connected to the internet.

The biggest red flag for cyberbullying is a withdrawal from technology. A sudden change in computer or phone usage may mean a child is being cyberbullied. The Anti-Bullying Alliance "Cyber-bullying: Top tips for parents and carers" can be found at: https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/advice-and-support/advice-parents-and-carers

14. Response to Cyberbullying

When responding to cyberbullying the school will:

- Act as soon as an incident has been reported or identified.
- Provide appropriate support for the person who has been cyberbullied and work with the person who has carried out the bullying to ensure that it does not happen again.
- Liaise with external parties to fully investigate the incident or pass on evidence, seeking advice from professionals where necessary.
- Encourage the person being bullied to keep any evidence (screenshots) of the bullying activity to assist any investigation.
- Take all available steps where possible to identify the person responsible.
- This may include:
    - Looking at use of the school systems
    - Identifying and interviewing possible witnesses
    - Contacting the service provider and the police, if necessary
- Work with the individuals and online service providers to prevent the incident from spreading and assist in removing offensive or upsetting material from circulation.
- Confiscate and search pupils' electronic devices, such as mobile phones, in accordance with the law and the school searching policy, the DfE 'Searching, screening and confiscation at school' and Childnet cyberbullying guidance to ensure that the school's powers are used proportionately and lawfully.
- Request the deletion of locally held content and content posted online if they contravene school behavioural policies.
- Ensure that sanctions are applied to the person responsible for the cyberbullying; the school will take steps to change the attitude and behaviour of the bully, as well as ensuring access to any additional help that they may need.
- Inform the police if a criminal offence has been committed.
- Provide information to staff and pupils regarding steps they can take to protect themselves online. This may include:

○ Advising those targeted not to retaliate or reply;
○ Providing advice on blocking or removing people from contact lists;
○ Helping those involved to think carefully about what private information they may have in the public domain.

15. Bullying Outside School Premises

DfE guidance September 2023 provides that teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises "to such an extent as is reasonable". This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.

Where bullying outside school is reported and the behaviour has a significant impact on the safety and well-being of students in school it will be investigated, in conjunction with parents/carers and other outside agencies, and acted on. The Headteacher will consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or social services in their local authority of the action taken against a student. The Cottesloe School will work in partnership with external agencies, taking advice where necessary. If the misbehaviour is criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police will always be informed

16. Procedure for dealing with bullying behaviour within The Cottesloe School

16.1 Prevention

Prevention is clearly the strategy of choice. Bullying is often secret and, therefore, it is difficult to deal with it after it occurs. We at the Cottesloe School, aim to address prevention vigorously by a variety of techniques:

● At the whole school level – through assemblies, when children will be informed of the school's zero-tolerance policy and the actions that will be taken to prevent bullying taking place. This issue will be raised regularly when the whole school will be informed of the progress of the anti-bullying policy and procedures, and any changes which may be introduced. This time will also be used to challenge the notion that there can be innocent, neutral bystanders with regards to the issue of bullying.

● At classroom level e.g. during Tutor Time and within PSHCE. Here the focus will be on developing strong anti-bullying messages and challenging the idea that bullying is acceptable as part of growing up.

● The Cottesloe School recognises that there are particular times when students may be more vulnerable to bullying – for example, at 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.

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

● The school supports the national anti-bullying week in November, to help raise awareness of the issue and the support available.

16.2 Incident Management

The school will take firm and decisive action to deal with any incident of bullying. The Behaviour for Learning Policy and the School's Behavioural system will be used and applied to hold students accountable for their actions.

16.3 Post Incident Responses for the Target or Victim of Bullying

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

proactive, sympathetic and supportive response to children who are the victims of bullying. The exact nature of the response will be determined by the particular child's individual needs and may include:

- immediate action to stop the incident and secure the child's 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 or monitoring.
- creation of a support group.
- peer mediation or peer mentoring.
- informing or involving parents.
- adult mediation between the instigator and the victim (provided this does not increase the victim's vulnerability).
- arrangements to review progress.

16.4 For the bully or guilty party / parties

The Cottesloe 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. We 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.
- loss of lunch or break time privileges.
- detention.
- put on a report card or individual behaviour plan or Personal Support Plan.
- removal from class or group.
- withholding participation in sports or out of school activity (if not an essential part of curriculum).
- parents informed.
- counselling or instruction in alternative ways of behaving.
- adult mediation between the instigator and the victim (provided this is safe for the victim).
- fixed periods of exclusion.
- permanent exclusion (in extreme cases which may involve violence).
- rewards or positive reinforcement for children in order to promote change and bring unacceptable behaviour under control.
- external training by appropriate bodies.
- signposting to appropriate support materials and support agencies, both internally and externally.

17. Parental Involvement

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

We recognise the important influence which parents or carers have on their children and would wish to enlist their support when their child is involved in bullying – either as a victim or an instigator. If a child is involved in a single serious incident of bullying or there is evidence that the same child is involved repeatedly in less serious incidents (either as a victim or an instigator) the 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 will be informed.

18. Monitoring Bullying

All reported incidents of bullying behaviour should be recorded on The Cottesloe School statement forms, Safeguard, SIMS and the Serious Incidents Log. The number of reported incidents will be regularly reviewed.

19. Involvement of Parents/Other Adults

At The Cottesloe School we aim to support parents of children who are either bullying or being bullied. We support parents by discussing the problems and offering help and advice as soon as the situation becomes evident.

Outcomes can only be discussed with the parents/carers of their child. Information and student involvement will not be discussed with other parents.

20. Complaints

Should a parent or student feel unhappy about the way that the school has responded to an incident, their complaint must be heard. However, the school governors may become involved, through the Disciplinary Sub-Committee, if parents remain dissatisfied. Parents and students must follow the guidelines set out in the school's Complaints and Resolutions Policy (available on the school website https://www.cottesloe.bucks.sch.uk/about/policies)

21. External support/information agencies:

- Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- Childline: www.childline.org.uk
- Family Lives: www.familylives.org.uk
- Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk
- MindEd: www.minded.org.uk
- NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk
- Restorative Justice Council: www.restorativejustice.org.uk
- The Diana Award: www.diana-award.org.uk
- Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk
- Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk
- Young Carers: www.youngcarers.net

Cyberbullying

- Childnet: www.childnet.com
- Internet Watch Foundation: www.iwf.org.uk
- Think U Know: www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk
- The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-council-for-child-internet-safety-ukccis
- DfE 'Cyberbullying: advice for headteachers and school staff': www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying
- DfE 'Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying': www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying

22. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually.