



Ashford School and Ashford Friars Preparatory School

Anti Bullying – Whole School Policy and Procedures

This policy is guided by the framework outlined in the UCST Anti-bullying policy, the key requirements of which are:

- The school must publish an anti-bullying policy
- The school must give the policy to parents at the point which pupils join the school
- The school must keep accurate records of bullying incidents
- The school must publish a complaints procedure

Introduction

Ashford School and Ashford Friars Prep School aim to work in partnership with parents to encourage every pupil to act with integrity, responsibility and concern for others. We also wish to promote mutual understanding and respect for others whilst giving each pupil the confidence and independence of mind to enjoy a fulfilling and successful life. Ashford School and Ashford Friars Prep School see themselves as a community which does not tolerate bullying and which will take positive action against bullying. We understand that bullying is a serious issue and can cause lasting psychological damage and drive young people to desperate measures.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to provide a practical and coherent framework to establish an environment where bullying is discouraged and deal sensitively and effectively with any incidents of bullying which may occur, ensuring all pupils feel safe to learn. This policy is made available to parents via the school website. This policy is written in conjunction with the DCSF Guidance – ‘Safe to Learn’.

Procedures for dealing with bullying are outlined in this policy and will be shared appropriately with parents and pupils.

Defining bully and anti social behaviour

What is bullying?

Bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt or threaten someone. It happens when an individual (or group of individuals) goes out of its way **deliberately** to threaten, frighten, abuse or hurt someone else. The action is **repeated over time** and victims find it difficult to defend themselves.

Bullying can take many different forms, which include:

- **Physical bullying** should not be seen merely in terms of a pupil being physically threatened or assaulted. It can include damage done to the victim's property, clothing or school work
- **Verbal bullying** includes name calling, sarcasm and persistent teasing
- **Emotional (or mental) bullying** is when someone is tormented, ridiculed or humiliated. Often the person who engages in this form of bullying does not consider it to be bullying but refers to it as a "joke". If this victim does not find teasing or taunting funny, then it is not a joke
- **Indirect bullying** involves spreading unpleasant stories about someone, excluding them from a social group or spreading nasty, malicious stories about them
- **Racist or Religious bullying** is when a pupil is targeted for representing a group; it is likely to hurt not only the victim but also other people in the same group
- **Sexual bullying** is characterized by unwelcome remarks about appearance, inappropriate (and uninvited) touching and sexual innuendos and propositions. It can also be related to sexual orientation
- **Cyber bullying** is when one person or a group of people aim to threaten, tease or embarrass someone else by using a mobile phone, the internet or other technologies

An explanation of who bullies are, why they bully and who gets bullied:

Who are bullies and why do they bully?

Children who bully others come from all social classes and cultural backgrounds. He/she may believe that bullying will make others respect him/her. He/she may be inadequate, unhappy and insecure and may be in need of help.

It is important to help the bully both to understand that he/she is responsible for hurting someone and that such behaviour will not be tolerated. If a bully is allowed to get away with such behaviour, it will continue; a systematic approach to deal with the bully is necessary.

Who gets bullied?

Both boys and girls bully others. Usually, boys bully boys but girls can be bullied by either sex. Research suggests that some individuals are more likely to be bullied than others, e.g. being different in some obvious respect, lacking social skills, having an over-protective family. Anyone can be the victim of bullying but no one deserves to be bullied.

Strategies and actions to combat bullying

This policy gives clear guidance to staff on identifying and dealing with bullying in school and it is reviewed regularly.

The school gives clear guidance to parents and pupils of how to deal with bullying. This guidance is given in parent and pupil handbooks. (See Appendix 1 and 2)

Guidance for teachers

Bullying occurs in every School. We are fortunate in working in an environment where incidents of bullying are unusual. This should not make us complacent; on the contrary, it should make us more

determined to preserve what is clearly a valuable part of the School's culture.

As a teacher or other adult within the school, any suspected cases of bullying should be investigated immediately, following the procedures as outlined in this policy

How do I know if bullying is happening?

There are a number of characteristics which make some children more vulnerable to being bullied than others are. If you think about your own knowledge of incidents where you have become aware of bullying, you will be able to add to this list:

- Lacking close friends, awkwardness, few social skills
- Behaving inappropriately with peers, being a nuisance in some way, latching onto a group where they are not welcome
- Being shy
- Being different in some obvious way e.g. appearance, being excessively clumsy, inept at games
- Coming from an over-protective environment
- Having a family which promotes a child's special qualities in some way
- Being from a minority or racial group

Inevitably, personal judgement is essential in dealing with and investigating cases of bullying; knowledge of individual pupils is critical and this is why the effective use of the pastoral system is essential. If you have any doubts at all, talk to another member of the staff to find out whether anyone else has noticed a change in behaviour. The following may indicate that bullying is taking place:

- Increased absenteeism
- Withdrawn, remote, absent minded behaviour
- Physical symptoms such as stomach aches, vomiting, limb pains, sleeplessness

What should I do when I feel reasonably sure that bullying is taking place?

Contact the Form Teacher, who will investigate the case thoroughly by:

- Interviewing the bully and victim separately
- Encouraging the pupils concerned to write down what they believed happened
- Keep a written record of:
 - What was said
 - Whether there was a satisfactory solution which left the victim feeling supported and the bully aware that the behavior was unacceptable
 - Whether further action was necessary
 - Whether the parents were informed
 - What sanctions were imposed

The keeping of written records is essential. The School has a legal obligation to provide an environment

where a pupil can learn free from harassment. It may become necessary to prove this in a court of law. With this in mind, individual cases of bullying should be monitored at regular intervals. Where intervention has not been successful the Head should be informed. It is often useful to appoint a case officer in extreme (or complicated) cases. In this way, an appointed individual is able to provide an overview of the situation and act as the focus for collecting information.

What does the School do to combat bullying?

The School takes a number of practical measures in order to discourage bullying and to promote an atmosphere of tolerance and respect. These include:

- Discussing the problems of bullying in the context of the personal, social and emotional development. The Prep School SEAL programme follows 7 themes each of which is relevant to reducing bullying
- Holding staff meetings regularly in which the academic and social progress of individual children can be highlighted and discussed
- Encouraging staff to be alert to changes in behavior, friendship groups, punctuality and attendance
- Making sure that the situation is monitored effectively during breaks and lunch hours
- Speaking out about bullying in assemblies led by the Head

Staff are given 'pastoral care' induction sessions and updated on the latest trends in bullying through Inset.

In addition, the School has established pastoral procedures that encourage pupils to speak out when they either find themselves a victim of bullying or see others being bullied. An anti-bullying policy is of little use, however, if the School's culture does not promote an atmosphere of tolerance and respect. Within the supportive atmosphere that such an ethos provides, bullying is considered to be extraordinary behaviour, behaviour moreover, which is out of place in the School environment.

When sanctions are necessary to deal with bullying, they are intended to hold pupils who bully to account for their behaviour and to ensure that they face up to the harm they have caused and to learn from it. The sanctions will provide an opportunity for the pupil to right the harm they have caused.

The school will inform and work with parents in all incidents of bullying, advising them on the strategies to adopt, whether their child is being bullied or the one doing the bullying.

Useful Web Links

Dcsf – Safe to Learn – Embedding anti-bullying work in schools.

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/doc/11908/SAFE%20TO%LEARN.pdf>

Cyber bullying

<http://yp.direct.gov.uk/cyberbullying/>

Don't Suffer in Silence

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying/index.shtml>

Supporting Documentation

Staff Handbook

Human Resources Policy Folder January 2011

Ashford School and Ashford Friars Prep School Procedures and Guidance

Appendix 1

Guidance to Parents (To be included in the Parent Handbook)

The school has an Anti bullying policy, a document that sets out how the school deals with incidents of bullying. A copy of this will have been given to you when your child joined the school. Further copies can be obtained from the school office.

As a parent, if you feel that your child is the victim of bullying or you know of another child who is being bullied, contact the School immediately. Your complaint will be taken seriously and prompt action taken. The immediate point of contact should be the Form Teacher, who should be able to deal with most problems. If the situation does not improve, the Form Teacher will consult the Head and if disciplinary action is considered necessary, we will contact you.

If, as a parent, you feel that insufficient is being done to address the problem, then you should follow the school's complaints procedure.

At any point in this process, you are very welcome to come in to school and discuss the problem. It is important to realise that there is a difference between rough play and accidental injury, and bullying. Bullying is deliberate and repeated and can take many forms.

Is it bullying?

It is bullying if your child feels hurt because individuals or groups are;

- Persistently calling your child names
- Threatening him/her
- Pressuring your child to give someone money or possessions
- Using physical violence
- Damaging your child's possessions
- Spreading rumours about your child or your family
- Using text, email or web space to write or say hurtful things about your child (cyberbullying)

It is bullying if your child feels hurt because of things said about your ethnic background, religious faith, gender, sexuality, disability, special educational need, appearance or issues in your family.

What to do:

If your child is being bullied

- Calmly talk with your child about his/her experience
- Make a note of what your child says, particularly who was said to be involved, how often bullying has occurred; where it happened and what happened
- Reassure your child that he/she has done the right thing to tell you about the bullying
- Explain to your child that should any further incidents occur, he/she should report them to a teacher immediately
- Make an appointment to see your child's class teacher or form teacher
- Explain to the teacher the problems your child is experiencing

When talking with the teachers about bullying

- Try to stay calm, bear in mind that the teacher may have no idea that your child is being bullied or may have heard conflicting accounts of an incident
- Be as specific as possible about what your child says has happened, give dates and places of where the incident happened
- Make a note of what action the school intends to take
- Ask if there is anything you can do to help your child in the school
- Stay in touch with the school; let them know if things improve as well as if problems continue.

If your child is bullying other children

Often parents are not aware that their child is involved in bullying. Children may sometimes bully others because;

- They do not know it's wrong
- They think it is funny or just a joke
- They are copying older brothers or sisters or other people in the family they admire
- They haven't learnt other, better ways of mixing with their school friends
- Their friends are encouraging or pressurizing them to bully others

- They are going through a difficult time and acting out aggressive feelings

To stop your child from bullying others

- Talk with your child; explain that he/she is doing is unacceptable and makes other children unhappy
- Discourage other members of your family from bullying behavior or from using aggression or force to get what they want
- Regularly check with your child how things are going in school
- Give your child lots of praise and encouragement when he or she is cooperative or kind to other people
- Support the school with any strategies they implement to tackle the bullying behavior

If your child experiences bullying by mobile phone text messages or email

- Inform the school immediately
- Calmly talk with your child about his/her experience
- Keep the message so that it can be shown
- Make a note of what your child says, particularly who was said to be involved; how often the bullying has occurred; where it happened and what has happened
- Explain to your child to be careful who he/she gives his/her mobile phone or email number to
- Reassure your child that he/she has done the right thing to tell you about the bullying
- Explain to your child that if any further incidents occur, he/she should report them to a teacher immediately
- Make an appointment to see your child's class teacher or form tutor
- Explain to the teacher the problems your child is experiencing

Useful Web Links

Cyberbullying

<http://yp.direct.gov.uk/cyberbullying/>

Don't Suffer in Silence

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying/index.shtml>

Appendix 2

Guidance for Pupils (to be included in the pupils' handbook)

If you are a pupil and are being bullied yourself or know someone who is being bullied, take action and tell an adult. It could be your Form Teacher or anyone else whom you trust to listen to you, take you seriously and help you deal with the problem.

It is important to realise that there is a difference between rough play and accidental injury, and bullying. Bullying is deliberate and repeated and can take many forms.

Is it bullying?

It is bullying if you feel hurt because individuals or groups are:

- Calling you names
- Threatening you
- Pressuring you to give someone money or possessions
- Hitting you
- Damaging your possessions
- Spreading rumours about you or your family
- Using text, email or web space to write or say hurtful things (cyberbullying)

It is bullying if you feel hurt because of things said about your ethnic background, religious faith, gender, sexuality, disability, special education need, appearance or issues in your family.

Our school does not tolerate bullying. This is what we do about bullying:

- Make sure that the person being bullied is safe
- Work to stop the bullying happening again
- Provide support to the person being bullied

Remember – No one deserves to be frightened, abused or hurt by someone else. Always tell an adult you can trust and things will improve.

What to do:

If you are being bullied

- Try to stay calm and look as confident as you can
- Be firm and clear – look them in the eye and tell them to stop
- Get away from the situation

- Tell an adult what has happened straight away

After you have been bullied

- Tell your teacher or another adult in the school
- Tell your family
- If you are scared to tell a teacher or an adult on your own, ask a friend to go with you
- Keep on speaking until someone listens and does something to stop the bullying
- Do not blame yourself for what has happened

When you are talking to an adult about bullying

Be clear about

- What has happened to you
- How often it has happened
- Who was involved
- Who saw what was happening
- Where did it happen
- What you have done about it already

If you experience bullying by mobile phone or text messages or email

- Tell your teacher, friend or parent
- Keep the message so that it can be shown
- Make a note of when the threatening message was sent
- Be careful who you give your mobile phone or email address to

Useful Web Links

Cyberbullying

<http://yp.direct.gov.uk/cyberbullying/>

Don't Suffer in Silence

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying/index.shtml>

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