



Anti-bullying Policy

Introduction

At The Cedars, our community is based upon respect for others, compassion and personal responsibility. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so that every one of our pupils can develop his full potential. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed and orderly atmosphere. The ethos of the school encourages pupils to care and support each other.

We are firmly committed to promoting partnership with parents and they play a vital role in supporting the school in maintaining high standards of behaviour. Our tutorial system allows parents and teachers to work together to ensure that pupils are constantly striving to be the best they can be through our character development and virtues programme.

Acceptance of this policy forms part of our standard terms and conditions. The policy is available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils on request. It is also available and known to staff.

Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration. A strong relationship of trust is developed and encouraged which makes any kind of bullying unacceptable. This policy applies to all pupils in the school.

Definition of Bullying

“Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally.”

(Preventing and Tackling Bullying, Advice for Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies, DfE, 2011, p. 4)

It includes the intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another person by physical (including sexual), verbal (including email, chat room, SMS messages and any type of social media), and emotional means (by excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. Bullying may be hidden and subtle or overt and intimidatory.

Bullying may involve actions or comments that are racist, sexual or sexist, which focus on religion, cultural background, disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape). Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time and can involve everyone – students and parents.

Bullying can be so serious that it causes psychological damage, eating disorders, self-harm and even suicide, and whilst bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.

Cyber-Bullying

Cyber-bullying is defined by Childnet International as *'the sending or posting of harmful or cruel text or images using the internet or other digital communication devices.'* The DfE defines it as, *'an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself.'*

The Anti-Bullying Association has identified seven types of cyber-bullying, ranging from abusive text messages, emails and phone calls, to bullying in internet chatrooms, social networking sites and instant messaging:

- 1. Text messages** – unwelcome texts that are threatening or cause discomfort.
- 2. Picture/video-clips** via mobile phone cameras – images sent to others to make the victim feel threatened or embarrassed. This includes what is called “sexting”.
- 3. Mobile phone calls** – silent calls or abusive messages – or stealing the victim’s phone and using it to harass others, to make them believe the victim is responsible.
- 4. Emails** – threatening or bullying emails, often sent using a pseudonym or somebody else’s name.
- 5. Chat room bullying** – menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in web-based chat room.
- 6. Instant messaging (IM)** – unpleasant messages sent while children conduct real-time conversations online.
- 7. Bullying via websites** – use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal polling sites.

Signs of Bullying

A pupil may indicate by signs or behaviour that he is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and they should investigate if a pupil:

- becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence;
- is unwilling to go to school;
- starts stammering;
- attempts or threatens self-harm;
- cries himself to sleep at night or has nightmares/bedwetting;
- regularly feels ill in the morning;
- begins to do poorly in school work;
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged;
- has possessions go missing;
- has unexplained cuts and bruises;
- stops eating;
- is frightened to say what is wrong;
- is frightened of walking to or from school; or
- changes his usual routine.

Although there may be other causes for some of the circumstances above, a repetition or combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers.

All staff should be aware of the signs and report promptly any suspicions of bullying to the appropriate person.

The role of governors

The governors will liaise with the Headmaster over all anti-bullying strategies, and be made aware of individual cases where appropriate.

The governing body will discuss, review and endorse agreed strategies and will discuss the Headmaster's report on the working of this policy.

The governors will liaise with the Headmaster to arrange for a regular programme of staff development, which will include child protection and anti-bullying strategies. This will include training for support staff as well as teachers.

The role of staff

The Headmaster

The Headmaster has a legal duty under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to draw up procedures to prevent bullying amongst pupils.

The Headmaster will:

- ensure that all staff have an opportunity of discussing strategies;
- review strategies regularly;
- determine procedures;
- discuss development of the strategies with the Senior Management Team;
- ensure appropriate training is available;
- ensure that all staff, volunteers, parents and students are aware of procedures; and
- report to the governors.

The Deputy Headmaster will:

- Maintain a register of all incidents where bullying is suspected or alleged;
- Ensure that victims of bullying are spoken to again after at least two weeks has elapsed since the resolution of the original incident in case of unreported repetition.

The Head of Section will:

- 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 the bullied and bullies;
- ensure that all incidents where bullying is suspected or alleged are recorded in the Bullying register and monitor the register for patterns over time;
- refer and liaise with inter-agency working groups if necessary;
- arrange relevant student training; and
- determine how best to involve parents in the solution of individual problems.

Form Teachers will:

- be responsible for liaising with the Head of Section over all incidents involving pupils in their forms; and
- be involved in any agreed strategy to achieve a solution.

All Staff and volunteers will:

- know and follow all relevant policies and procedures;
- be observant and talk to pupils;
- deal with incidents according to the policy;
- never let any incidence of bullying pass by unreported, whether on-site or during an off-site activity;
- take action to reduce the risk of bullying at all times and in places where is most likely; and
- discuss from time to time where extra staff might be needed.

Criminal Law

Making repeated offensive remarks on websites can be a criminal offence. Perpetrators may also be breaking the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003 and the Public Order Act 1986.

Preventing Bullying

We take the following measures to prevent bullying at The Cedars:

- All new pupils are briefed thoroughly on the school's expected standards of behaviour. They are told what to do if they encounter bullying.
- In their first few weeks at The Cedars all new members of staff are given guidance on this policy and in how to react to allegations of bullying.
- Our trained tutors play an invaluable role in detecting and being alert to any possible signs of bullying.
- We have a strong and experienced pastoral team, supported by the Director of Formation and Heads of Section, who are available to give confidential advice and counselling support to pupils.
- The Director of Formation and Heads of Section give support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both victims and bullies.
- The School Chaplain will also give support and guidance to pupils of all faiths who may refer themselves to him, perhaps at a time of bereavement or sickness or family problems. The Chaplain will provide advice and support and seek to encourage respect and understanding for others.
- Staff are always on duty at times when pupils are not in the classroom and patrol the school site, including areas where bullying might occur. They are trained to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour.
- All tutors are given, as part of their training as tutors, guidance on how to detect signs of bullying.

- The Character Development Programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of values such as respect and moral responsibility. They will learn that bullying is always unacceptable and is harmful both to the victim and the perpetrator.
- The Student Council, made up of pupils chosen by their peers, are also given training which specifically covers the importance of offering support and assistance to their fellow pupils.
- All our pupils are encouraged to tell a member of staff, in particular their tutor, at once if they know that bullying is taking place.
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated promptly. Records of any incidents are kept securely in the office of the Deputy Headmaster and tracked so that patterns of behaviour can be identified and monitored.
- We reserve the right to investigate incidents that take place outside school hours involving our pupils.
- We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of preventative measures.
- Pupils' views on bullying and their suggestions for tackling bullying are canvassed at least once during each school year.

With regard to cyber-bullying specifically, The Cedars:

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its Acceptable Use Policy for the safe use of the internet. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system.
- Will impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet or email.
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyber-bullying in the Character Development Programme.
- Advises pupils not to respond to abusive emails, text messages or telephone calls and to keep copies of any offensive material.
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe.
- States that the use of cameras on mobile phones is not allowed without the express permission of any and every person that might appear in the resulting image. They must not be used in any way that might humiliate, demean or offend anyone.
- Ensures that parents know what steps to take if they suspect their child is being cyber-bullied.
- Offers advice and guidance to parents on all aspects of emerging technologies.

Procedure for Dealing with Reports of Bullying

If an incident of bullying is reported:

- The member of staff to whom it was reported, or who is first aware, will control the situation and reassure and support the pupils involved.
- He/she will inform the Head of Section or, in his/her absence, a member of the SMT.
- The victim will be interviewed and be asked to write an account of the events.
- The alleged bully and all others who may have been involved will be interviewed individually and asked to write an immediate account of events.

- The incident should be recorded and all statements signed and dated;
- The Head of Section or member of the SMT will then investigate the incident from all the collated evidence and will carry out further interviews if deemed necessary.
- Appropriate pastoral and/or disciplinary sanctions will be applied with reference to the Behaviour Policy.
- The parents/guardians are informed and can be invited to the school to discuss the matter. Their support should be sought and guidance should be provided by the school on how to deal with the issue.
- A way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and counselling, should be agreed. This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for pupils who are being bullied and for pupils who bully others.
- A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place.
- In very serious cases, and only after a member of the Senior Management Team has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or the Social Services. It is, however, the policy of The Cedars to endeavour to resolve such issues internally unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely. The school may exclude a pupil, either temporarily or permanently, in cases of severe and/or persistent bullying and in the event that the support put in place for the bully does not result in the modification of behaviour to an acceptable level. Such exclusions will be agreed between the Headmaster and Chair of Governors.
- **It is important to note that, where there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, a bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern.**

In each case the following principles should be borne in mind:

- It is important that children who experience bullying can be heard.
- It is important to note that people react differently to bullying and it is often very difficult to tell if someone is upset or hurt.
- If students feel upset, they are encouraged to speak to their teacher or a responsible adult at an appropriate time.
- It must be emphasised to students that they should not take the law into their own hands.
- They should be reassured that the adult will try to sort out the problem as calmly as possible.
- Parents should be invited into school to discuss matters.
- Each incident should be recorded on ISAMS and linked to the students concerned. Three separate records are needed: an incident note on ISAMS; a full file with statements to be stored in the Incident File in the Headmaster's office; and an entry in the Bullying Register.
- Students will be told always to report incidents of bullying.

Preventing bullying through the curriculum

- The school will raise the awareness of the destructive nature of bullying through spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, school assemblies, the school council, use of form time and through the tutorial system as appropriate.
- Changing the attitudes and behaviour of bullies will play a major part in the strategies used by the school.

Monitoring

The Headmaster and Senior Management Team will consider reports of bullying to determine what can be learned from the incidents and how they were handled, with a view to improving the school's strategies. These reports will also enable patterns to be identified. The Headmaster will report to the governing body.

Signed **R Teague**

This policy will be reviewed annually	
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