POLICY FOR THE PREVENTION OF BULLYING

Owner: **Deputy Head Pastoral**
Reviewed: **September 2023**
Next review due: **September 2024**

Introduction

This document is a statement of the aims, strategies and procedures for the prevention of bullying at Somerhill**.**

All children attending Somerhill have the right to feel welcome, secure and happy. Only if this is the case will all members of the school community achieve their maximum potential. It is our belief that everyone has a right to be treated with respect and we expect members of our community to show concern for one another and treat each other with consideration regarding feelings, individuality and personality.

The actions of a bully within our community would destroy this harmony so it is our firm resolve to provide a policy which will swiftly and effectively deal with the problem should it arise.

Any form of bullying is unacceptable and the school takes all practicable steps to ensure that this is made clear to all pupils. It is everyone's responsibility to prevent the occurrence of bullying and to deal with any incidents quickly and effectively.

It is vitally important that bullying issues are treated with real seriousness as they can result in a child being 'damaged' and hurt and, in extreme circumstances, have been known to result in a child taking his / her own life.

What is Bullying?

Although there is no legal definition of bullying it is usually defined as the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online; behaviour that is the willful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone else.

Bullying can be described as a deliberate act done to cause physical or emotional/psychological distress solely to give a feeling of power, status, or other gratification to the bully. Bullying is often motivated by prejudice against particular individuals or groups, for example, on the grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs, and disability or because a child is adopted or is a carer. It is a term that covers a range of deliberate and persistent behaviour, including the following:

- **Physical:** pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, any form of violence.
- **Verbal**: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing.
- **Emotional:** tormenting, threatening, ridicule, humiliation, exclusion from groups or activities.
- **Racist:** racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
- **Religious:** any derogatory reference to faith or cultural background.
- **Sexual/sexist:** unwanted physical contact, abusive or homophobic comments, sexting.
- **Reference to Disability**
- **Cyber-bullying:** tormenting, threatening, harassing, humiliating, embarrassing or

otherwise targeting by another child using the internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phone. The methods used are limited only by the bully's imagination and access to technology.

Aims

It is the aim of the school to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that structures and procedures embedded in school behaviour guidelines and policies prevent bullying. This document should be read in conjunction with **The Policy for School Behaviour and Discipline** which includes **Rewards and Sanctions.**

Good behaviour and discipline are promoted throughout the school, and in particular we aim to:

- Promote self-discipline in the pupils and encourage them to have a proper regard for authority
- Encourage good behaviour and respect for others
- Ensure that the pupils' standard of behaviour is acceptable
- Regulate the conduct of pupils
- Take all practicable measures to prevent all forms of bullying among our pupils

Strategies for the Prevention of Bullying

At Somerhill we seek to prevent bullying by:

- Developing a code of behaviour that sets out how everyone involved in our school is expected to behave, in face-to-face contact and online, and within and outside of our activities

- Providing support and training for all staff on dealing with all forms of bullying, including racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic and sexual bullying

- Putting clear and robust anti-bullying procedures in place. Our regular discussions with staff, children and families will focus on:

  - Group members' responsibilities to look after one another and uphold the behaviour code
  - Practicing skills such as listening to each other
  - Respecting the fact that we are all different
  - Making sure that no one is without friends
  - Dealing with problems in a positive way
  - Checking that our anti-bullying measures are working well reporting a case of Bullying

Children who are being bullied at school will not always be prepared to tell those in authority. However, when a disclosure is made, it should **always** be treated seriously. While others may not feel that certain actions or words are of a bullying nature, if the recipient feels that they are being bullied that is sufficient evidence to treat the case as prima facie bullying.

Pupils

Studies have proved that victims will inform the following in order of frequency:

1. Friends. 2. Family. 3. Teachers.

Strangely, though, victims feel teachers are more influential than either of the other two categories in putting a stop to bullying.

It is, therefore, very important that all claims are followed-up by staff.

For those pupils who are unable to inform staff about their problem, observations regarding specific behaviour patterns can be routinely established within Somerhill. Signs of bullying might include:

- Unwillingness to come to school
- Low morale
- Withdrawn, isolated behaviour
- Complaining about missing possessions
- Being easily distressed
- Damaged or incomplete work

In the event of any of these indicators suggesting that bullying may be taking place, all staff are urged to check with colleagues, be vigilant and the child should be discussed at the appropriate school's staff meeting.

Staff will also be able to use their own knowledge of the pupils in the school to identify changes in behaviour that might indicate bullying.

Pupils are encouraged to be open with their parents about any problems that they may be experiencing at school. Parents are encouraged to pass on any concerns to the school, and we aim to be receptive and responsive regarding all information passed on to us by parents.

Pupils are encouraged to discuss any cases of alleged bullying as soon as possible with a trusted adult, whether that be a teacher, parent/carer or other school staff member.

Pupils also have access to physical worry boxes and virtual worry boxes should they find it difficult to voice their concerns in person.

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Involvement and liaison with parents

We will:

- Take steps to involve parents and carers in developing policies and procedures, to ensure they are aware that the school does not tolerate any form of bullying.
- Make sure that key information about bullying is available to parents in a variety of formats, including via the school website.
- Ensure all parents/carers know who to contact if they are worried about bullying and where to access independent advice.
- Work with all parents/carers and the local community to address issues beyond the school gates that give rise to bullying.
- Ensure that parents work with the school to role model positive behaviour for pupils, both on and offline.
- Ensure all parents know about our complaints procedure and how to use it effectively, to raise concerns in an appropriate manner.

The topic of bullying, together with the strategies for prevention and coping with the problem is featured regularly in PSHE and in assemblies. Guest speakers are invited to discuss bullying, and in particular Cyber-Bullying, with both pupils and parents. The children are told that bullying will not be tolerated in school and that all incidents will be taken seriously. As teachers we must remain aware of government initiatives (Anti-Bullying Week) and publications relevant to schools, pupils and parents.

All staff will receive training on a regular basis in means of identifying bullying and how best to address bullying issues – of whatever gravity.

Cyber-Bullying

All instances of cyber-bullying should be reported to the school E-Safety Officer and/or Lead DSL.

When responding to cyberbullying concerns, 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.
- 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.
- Ensure that sanctions are applied to the person responsible for the cyberbullying; the

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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.

Procedure to be followed in cases where bullying is suspected by members of staff or notified to them:

- All suspicions should be reported to the Form teacher and the Headmaster as soon as possible.
- The Lead DSL will be informed of all bullying issues where there are safeguarding concerns.
- Discuss with colleagues, seek advice from other teachers – share your information.
- Children who report bullying should always be assured that they have done the right thing in bringing the problem to the attention of an adult. The adult should remember to listen, believe, and act.
- Confidentiality should never be promised, but children should be assured that the problem will be dealt with by someone in a position to help.
- Re-assure the victim that secrecy is the bully's best weapon.

The Deputy Head Pastoral and/or Headmaster will take some or all of the following steps when a case of bullying is brought to their notice:

- a staff member (normally the Form teacher) may initially be asked to deal with the matter but if appropriate the Deputy Head Pastoral and/or Headmaster will further investigate the incident personally and may contact parents.
- The matter will be investigated thoroughly and will involve both the bully and the bullied; bullies and victims will be interviewed separately or together as appropriate.
- Discussions will take place in a private location. This will require patience and children should be asked to be honest.
- If possible, witnesses should be obtained and interviewed.
- The bully will be helped to recognise his/her unsociable behaviour and offered support to modify it. Bullying will not be eradicated if the behaviour of bullies is not modified. Efforts will always be made to identify why a pupil has bullied; support can then be offered to the bully to prevent recurrence.
- It is acknowledged that victims of bullying may become resigned to believing that they deserve to be bullied. They feel powerless and vulnerable. Self-esteem can be badly damaged, and self-confidence needs to be re-established. Children who have been bullied will be helped to find strategies to avoid and deflect the possibility of further bullying. Appropriate aspects of 'assertiveness' will be explored.

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- A written record of the incident, investigation and outcomes will be kept on file.
- Staff will be informed about the incident. Extra training will be incorporated as part of ongoing Safeguarding training.
- Action will be taken to prevent further incidents; such action may include:
    - The imposition of sanctions
    - Obtaining an apology
    - Informing the parents of both the bully and the bullied
    - Providing appropriate support and counselling
    - Providing mentor support for both victim and bully
- If the Deputy Head Pastoral and/or Headmaster judges fit, they will interview the parents straightaway.
- If after warning and/or parental involvement, further bullying occurs by any individual, the Headmaster will have recourse to suspension or expulsion. A review and analysis of the incident should take place to identify lessons learned.

Appendix A

Useful links and supporting organisations
- o Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- o Childline: www.childline.org.uk
- o Family Lives: www.familylives.org.uk
- o Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk
- o MindEd: www.minded.org.uk
- o NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk
- o The BIG Award: www.bullyinginterventiongroup.co.uk/index.php
- o PSHE Association: www.pshe-association.org.uk
- o Restorative Justice Council: www.restorativejustice.org.uk
- o The Diana Award: www.diana-award.org.uk
- o Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk
- o Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk
- o Young Carers: www.youngcarers.net
- o The Restorative Justice Council: www.restorativejustice.org.uk/restorative-practice- schools

SEND
- o Changing Faces: www.changingfaces.org.uk
- o Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk
- o Anti-Bullying Alliance Cyberbullying and children and young people with SEN and disabilities: www.cafamily.org.uk/media/750755/cyberbullying_and_send_-_module_final.pdf
- o DfE: SEND code of practice: www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of- practice-0-to-25

Cyberbullying
- o Childnet: www.childnet.com
- o Internet Watch Foundation: www.iwf.org.uk
- o Think U Know: www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- o UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk
- o The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-council-for-child-internet-safety-ukccis

- o DfE 'Cyberbullying: advice for headteachers and school staff': www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying
- o DfE 'Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying': www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying

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Race, religion and nationality
- Anne Frank Trust: www.annefrank.org.uk
- Kick it Out: www.kickitout.org
- Report it: www.report-it.org.uk
- Stop Hate: www.stophateuk.org
- Tell Mama:www.tellmamauk.org
- Educate against Hate: www.educateagainsthate.com
- Show Racism the Red Card: www.srtrc.org/educational

LGBT
- Barnardo's LGBT Hub:
  www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/our_work/lgbtq.htm
- Metro Charity: www.metrocentreonline.org
- EACH: www.eachaction.org.uk
- Proud Trust: www.theproudtrust.org
- Schools Out: www.schools-out.org.uk
- Stonewall: www.stonewall.org.uk

Sexual harassment and sexual bullying
- Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAW)
  www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk
    - A Guide for Schools:
      www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/data/files/resources/71/EVAW-Coalition-Schools-Guide.pdf
- Disrespect No Body: www.gov.uk/government/publications/disrespect-nobody-campaign-posters
- Anti-bullying Alliance: Preventing and responding to Sexual Bullying: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-about-bullying/sexual-and-gender-related/preventing-and-responding-sexual
- Anti-bullying Alliance: advice for school staff and professionals about developing effective anti-bullying practice in relation to sexual bullying: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-about-bullying/sexual-and-gender-related

Note: Additional links can be found in 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (July 2017)
www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying