



Ackworth School

Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy has been reviewed by the Compliance and Policy Sub-Committee and approved by the School Committee

"We aim to create a happy and secure environment in which all pupils realise and develop their own special abilities in constant awareness of the needs and claims of others."

Introduction

1. The Ackworth School community thrives on mutual respect and good manners between students and staff. We are committed to providing a safe, caring environment free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so every one of our pupils can develop his / her potential. We expect all our pupils to treat members of staff and each other with courtesy and co-operation so that all can learn in a relaxed but orderly atmosphere. All students should care for and support each other. The bullying of staff whether by parents, pupils or colleagues is unacceptable.
2. Bullying can seriously damage a young person's confidence and sense of self-worth, and they will often feel that they are at fault in some way. It can lead to serious and prolonged emotional and/or psychological damage for an individual and even suicide. Those who conduct the bullying or witness the bullying can also experience emotional harm, and the impact on parents and school staff can be significant. Bullying itself is not a specific criminal offence but there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.
3. Ackworth School (the School) has pupils from diverse social and ethnic backgrounds and prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Parents and guardians have an important role to play in supporting the school in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and home have consistent expectations of behaviour and co-operate closely together. To this end, we give careful, considered advice in the online Pupil Organiser, where it is made clear that bullying is not tolerated by the School in any form whatsoever, and pupils are given guidance about the part they can play to prevent bullying including the advice that 'telling no-one' helps the bully.
4. Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the school. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable. It is important therefore that the school:
 - a. Makes it clear that bullying is unacceptable and wrong.



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- b. Deals with bullying effectively, including bullying which occurs outside school premises.
 - c. Supports the victims of bullying and helps them acquire the skills to avoid being bullied.
 - d. Offers guidance to bullies and helps them to change their behaviour.
 - e. Records and monitors incidents of bullying.
 - f. Follows a process of early intervention, sets out clear expectations of behaviour that is and isn't acceptable, and helps to stop negative behaviour from escalating.
5. Whilst bullying can occur from staff to staff, from staff to student, from student to staff and from student to student this policy focuses only on the last category.
 6. School staff members have the ability to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises but not impose sanctions – see below.
 7. Where bullying outside of school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The Head will decide if it is appropriate to notify the police, of any action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour is criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of public, the police must always be informed.
 8. School staff members can only impose disciplinary sanctions on the school premises or where the pupil is under the lawful control of school staff i.e. on a school trip.
 9. A bullying incident will be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.
 10. Where appropriate, we will invest in specialised skills to understand the needs of our pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender SEND and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual or Ally (LGBTQIA+) are likely to be more vulnerable pupils.
 11. This policy has been written with reference to the DFE advice “Preventing and Tackling Bullying (2014 and 2017)”.

Definition of Bullying

12. Bullying can be defined as behaviour that is repeated, intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally, often aimed at certain groups, for example because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. It can be motivated by prejudice against



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particular groups, e.g. on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability, or because a child is adopted or is a carer. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidatory.

13. Examples of bullying behaviour include:

- a. Hitting, kicking, pushing people around and spitting.
- b. Name calling, taunting, teasing and insulting.
- c. Intimidating, isolating or excluding from the group.
- d. Spreading rumours or writing unkind notes.
- e. Using improperly any form of e-technology, such as computers and mobile telephones (see sections on online -bullying).
- f. Taking, damaging or hiding possessions.
- g. Demanding money.

Please note that SEND and LGBTQIA+ are likely to be more vulnerable pupils.

Specific types of bullying include:

- a. Bullying related to race, religion or culture - this includes colour racism, phobias about religious beliefs, mocking personal customs, prejudice against traveller or gypsy communities and hostility towards refugees and people seeking asylum.
- b. Bullying related to special educational needs or disabilities – this includes exploiting a pupil's inability to react physically or mentally to what is happening to them, conditional friendship, and exploitative and manipulative bullying.
- c. Bullying related to appearance or health conditions – this includes exclusion from a group because of physical appearance or health issues as well as exploitative and manipulative bullying.
- d. Sexist bullying – this includes bullying based on sexist attitudes that when expressed demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. These attitudes are commonly based around the assumption that women are subordinate to men, or are inferior. Sexist bullying may sometimes be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviours.
- e. Sexual bullying – this includes bullying behaviour that has a specific sexual dimension or a sexual dynamic and it may be physical, verbal or emotional / psychological. Behaviours may involve suggestive sexual comments or innuendo including offensive comments about sexual reputation; or using sexual language that is designed to subordinate, humiliate or intimidate. Sexual bullying may be seen as sexual harassment by the School.
- f. Homophobic bullying – this includes bullying that is motivated by a prejudice against lesbian, gay, transgender or bisexual people. It includes



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spreading rumours that someone is gay, or suggesting that something or someone is inferior and so they are 'gay'.

- g. Bullying of young carers or looked-after children – this includes all bullying related to home circumstances and arrangements.
- h. Cyberbullying – this includes all bullying related to the internet, mobile phones, social networking sites or any other form of electronic communication. It can include all the above types of bullying but technology is the method by which the bullying is carried out. It differs from other types of bullying in that it invades home/personal space and is difficult to control once information is circulated.

Bullying Based on Disability or Special Educational Needs

- 14. This is bullying directed at a person because of a disability, impairment or special educational need. This can also occur because of an association with someone who has a disability or special educational need. SEND and LGBTQIA+ are likely to be more vulnerable pupils.

Signs of Bullying

- 15. There are many potential signs of bullying but changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied might include:
 - a. Unwillingness to return to school.
 - b. Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet.
 - c. Failure to produce work, or producing uncharacteristically poor work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others.
 - d. Books, bags and other belongings suddenly going missing, or being damaged.
 - e. Changes to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary).
 - f. Diminished levels of self-confidence.
 - g. Frequent visits to the medical centre with symptoms such as stomach pains or headaches.
 - h. Unexplained cuts and bruises.
 - i. Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class.
 - j. Choosing the company of adults.
 - k. Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact.
 - l. Difficulty in sleeping, experiencing nightmares.
 - m. Talking of suicide or running away.
- 16. Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms (indeed some are potentially signs of possible abuse), a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers.



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Preventative Measures

17. At the School we take the following preventative measures with respect to bullying:
- a. Our PSHE programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the school. A discussion of bullying, what it is, its effects, and what to do if it is occurring is an integral part of this. The programme is structured to enforce the message about community involvement and taking care of each other. If necessary, the School will call upon organisations or use specialised resources to help with particular problems.
 - b. PSHE is also used as a means to keep pupils up to date with developments in technology and our 'acceptable use' policy is regularly updated to take advances into account.
 - c. Staff and older pupils set a good example at the school and reinforce the necessity to respect one another. This culture extends throughout the school. The School's Quaker values underpin this process.
 - d. Other lessons highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable and by developing social skills. The consequences of bullying are clear to all and it is always evident that it is regarded as unacceptable.
 - e. All of our pupils are encouraged to tell a member of staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place. They are part of the school's approach to bullying and all play a part in preventing it. A positive and healthy relationship between form tutors and tutees helps to make it easy for pupils to report bullying whether it has occurred in or outside the school. Pupils are encouraged to openly discuss the cause of their bullying without fear of further bullying or discrimination.
 - f. All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents.
 - g. We have a strong and experienced team of Tutors, PALS (pastoral and academics leaders and assistants) and Heads of Houses, who support the Deputy Heads and are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority, and are alert to the possible signs of bullying. All staff have a role to play in our anti-bullying strategy and this is a regular part of staff training. Where necessary specialised training is offered to staff to help them understand the needs of their pupils.
 - h. We have a Mental Health and Wellbeing Practitioner and an Independent Listener who are an important part of our pastoral support service, providing specialist skills of assessment and wellbeing support. They are available to give confidential advice and support to pupils who can refer themselves to her when they have social, emotional or behavioural concerns. It might be



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that one of our pastoral team recommends to a pupil that they refer themselves to the Mental Health and Wellbeing Practitioner or Independent Listener, but the final decision to attend a session must come from the pupil themselves.

- i. Staff are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class and patrol the school site, particularly areas where bullying might occur (for example the locker rooms when open). If they observe inappropriate language or behaviour they can step in and if necessary follow the procedure below for dealing with bullying.
- j. In boarding houses there are strong teams of Assistant House staff supporting the Heads of Houses and the Matrons, who act *in loco parentis*. The informal house environment is important in reinforcing a pupil's standards and values providing the opportunities for friendly, informal discussion of matters of concern to the individual pupil outside the formal classroom. We encourage close contact between the Heads of House and the parents / guardians, and would always make contact if we were worried about a pupil's well-being.
- k. 'Initiation ceremonies' are not tolerated and any that may cause pain, anxiety or humiliation will be treated as bullying.
- l. All pupils have access to a telephone, enabling them to call for support in private.
- m. We reserve the right to investigate incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips and that occur in the vicinity of the school, involving our pupils.
- n. We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures. Parents are encouraged to be a part of the process and can help the school to resolve the issue and reinforce the value of good behaviour at home.
- o. Differences between people that could motivate bullying are openly discussed, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related differences. This includes children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities. We teach children that the use of prejudice based language is unacceptable.
- p. The school will always work with organisations such as the police and children's services where bullying is particularly serious or persistent or which may have occurred outside of the school, i.e. cyber-bullying.
- q. Disciplinary measures are applied to bullies, in order to show clearly that their behaviour is wrong. Disciplinary measures are fair, consistent and take into account any special education needs or disabilities that the pupils have and also takes into account the needs of vulnerable pupils. The School also considers the motivation behind the bullying behaviour and whether there are any concerns for the safety of the perpetrator. Where this is the case the child engaging in bullying may need help themselves. The perpetrator will receive ongoing guidance.



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Online Bullying

18. Technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. School staff members authorised to do so by the Head can confiscate an electronic device, such as a mobile phone or iPad. Only the Head or Deputy Head can examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so. There is no need for parental consent to search a student's mobile phone/iPad.
19. If, however, there are reasonable grounds to suspect that an electronic device which has been confiscated, contains evidence in relation to an offence, the device will be given to the police. Material that is suspected to be evidence relevant to an offence, or that is a pornographic image of a child or an extreme pornographic image, must not be deleted prior to giving the device to the police.
20. If the Head or Deputy Head find material that they do not suspect contains evidence in relation to an offence, they can decide whether it is appropriate to delete or retain the material as evidence of a breach of school discipline.

Definition

21. Online bullying can be defined as:
"Wilful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices. "cyberbullying" is when someone repeatedly makes fun of another person online or repeatedly picks on another person through e-mail or text message or when someone posts something online about another person that they don't like." <http://www.cyberbullying.org/>
22. Online bullying can involve: social networking sites such as Snapchat, TikTok, Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, and the use of emails and the use of mobile phones/iPads for SMS messaging and as cameras.

Online bullying – Preventative Measures

23. As well as the preventative measures outlined earlier the School also has the following preventative measures against online bullying:
 - a. We expect all students to adhere to the Computer Acceptable Use Policy contained in the online Pupil Organiser. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our IT Department can monitor pupils' use.
 - b. We may impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet.



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- c. School staff members authorised to do so by the Head can confiscate an electronic device, such as a mobile phone. Only the Head or Deputy Head can examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so. There is no need for parental consent to search a student's mobile phone.
- d. We offer guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and online bullying in PSHE and IT lessons, which covers blocking and removing contact. This information is also included in the Pupil Organiser.
- e. We offer guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe.
- f. Use of mobile phones is discouraged during the school day.
- g. The use of cameras on mobile phones is not allowed in washing and changing areas (or in the bedrooms of the boarding houses unless for a boarders personal use).
- h. Staff must not use their own mobile phones or other cameras to take photographs within the EYFS setting. Further advice on the taking of photographs and other images is given in the Staff Handbook.
- i. It is difficult to prevent parents taking photographs of their children at School events, but we are mindful of the potential danger which this poses, and remain vigilant for excessive or unusual activity.
- j. All staff are made aware of pupils whose photos must not be used in publicity and marketing material.

Procedures for Dealing with Reported Bullying

24. If an incident of bullying is reported or encountered the following procedure should be adopted:
 - a. The member of staff to whom the situation is reported or who first discovers the situation should control the situation, reassure and support the pupils involved.
 - b. He / she should inform the appropriate member of the pastoral team, most usually the Tutor although possibly the PAL or assistant PAL or Deputy Head (Pastoral) as soon as possible.
 - c. The victim will be interviewed on his/her own and asked to write an account of events, or the interviewer can scribe what is recounted.
 - d. The alleged bully, along with any others involved and any witnesses, will also be interviewed and asked to write a version of events, or the interviewer can scribe what is recounted.
 - e. **All statements should be signed by the interviewee and interviewer and dated.**
 - f. The incident should then be recorded by the member of staff, and all Tutors, Senior Year Tutors and the Deputy Head (Pastoral) informed. This is important as **all incidents of bullying need to be recorded separately**



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- and a list kept of them.** This will be done by the Deputy Head (Pastoral). The incident may be recorded in the serious incident file.
- g. The Head will be informed of all serious bullying incidents.
 - h. The person who has been bullied will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the alleged perpetrator. It will be made clear to him / her why it is inappropriate to respond directly to the perpetrator. He / she will be offered support to develop a coping strategy.
 - i. The alleged bully will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, separate from the victim and it will be made clear why his / her behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. He / she will be offered guidance on modifying his or her behaviour and will be warned not to get involved in any further bullying incidents. Any appropriate disciplinary sanctions will be dealt with at this point. In keeping with the Quaker ethos of looking for the good in everyone, each case will be dealt with on its own merits.
 - j. The parents/guardians of all parties should be informed and where appropriate invited to the school to discuss the matter. Their support should be sought.
 - k. A way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and counselling (where appropriate), should be agreed. This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for children who are being bullied and for pupils who bully others, as well as dealing with appropriate disciplinary measures. A meeting involving all parties, with close staff supervision, could be helpful in developing a strategy for all concerned to close the episode.
 - l. A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place.
 - m. In very serious cases, and only after the Head has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to the Social Services.

Intervention – Support for pupils who are bullied

- 25. We always support children who are bullied and make appropriate provision for a child's needs. The nature and level of support will depend on the individual circumstances and the level of need. This can include a quiet word from a teacher, house staff, tutor, PAL or Deputy Head, who knows the pupil well. Pastoral support will be offered and may include formal counselling, engaging with parents, referring to the local authority children's services, completing a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) or referring to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).
- 26. Where bullying has a severe impact on children's ability to learn the school will consider whether the child will benefit from being assessed for SEN. Any child that has been a victim of bullying that has had a pronounced impact will be offered counselling by our Mental Health Practitioner. The help of outside agencies like CAMHS will also be sought and the School will engage with the child's parents as a matter of course. Removal from school would only be



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considered as a last resort, School will consider using separate onsite provision to provide respite whilst it applies other measures to tackle the bullying so that bullied children feel safe at school, and on their way to and from school.

Alternative provision

27. Where a child has developed complex needs as a result of bullying which cannot be met by the School, then alternative provision will be arranged. The School will require assistance from the Local Authority but as an independent school, parents would usually remove their child from the School and seek alternative provision. The School will always support reintegration, working closely with pupils and their parents to agree a plan and timetable for return.
28. Further information on the School's anti-bullying code can be found in the online Pupil Organiser issued to pupils at the beginning of each school year. A copy of this policy is posted on the School website. Further advice is given to staff in the Staff Handbook.