



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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Definitions

“DfE” Department for Education

“DSL” Designated Safeguarding Lead

“MIS” Management Information System

“PSHE” Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education “SMT” Senior Management Team

Introduction

At The Laurels School, our community is based upon respect for others, compassion and personal responsibility. Pupils learn best in a safe and calm environment that is free from disruption and in which education is the primary focus. 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 her full potential. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co- operation so that pupils can learn in a relaxed and orderly atmosphere. The ethos of the school encourages pupils to care for and support each other.

The Laurels School is firmly committed to promoting partnership with parents as the prime educators of their children, and they play a vital role in supporting the School in maintaining high standards of behaviour. Our unique tutorial system allows parents and teachers to work hand-in-hand to ensure that pupils are constantly striving to be the best they can be through the Character Education programme. It is essential that the school and families have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate very closely together.

Various legislation and government guidance is reflected in this policy, including the Equality Act 2010, the Children Act 1989, the Education Act 2011 and DfE advice Preventing and Tackling Bullying (July 2017). This guidance is aimed at eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act in all areas of society.

When there is ‘reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm’ a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern under the Children Act 1989. In such cases, procedures to be followed would be as per our Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy.

Acceptance of this policy forms part of our standard terms and conditions, also enshrined in the PACT Charter, to which every parent must adhere. The policy is available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils on our website and on request. It is also available and made known to staff. This policy was written with reference to the advice for preventing and tackling bullying provided by the Department of Education in March 2014.

Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated at The Laurels School. 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.

Aims and objectives of this policy

- To promote a positive caring ethos in The Laurels School and to ensure that all the pupils feel safe in our environment.
- To enable pupils to understand clearly what constitutes bullying throughout the curriculum and day to day life at School by raising awareness and ensuring that it will not be tolerated by the school community.
- To enable parents to feel confident that bullying will be firmly dealt with by The Laurels School.
- To raise staff awareness of the presence of bullying, as/and staff need to be alert to pupils who may be vulnerable and at risk from bullying.
- To ensure the school implements the guidelines for action and makes referral on all serious cases where bullying is identified.
- Bullying is wrong and damages individual pupils. We therefore do all we can to prevent it, by developing a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable.
- As a school, we aim to produce a safe and secure environment where all can learn without anxiety, and measures are in place to reduce the likelihood of bullying. Essentially, we wish to establish a climate of trust and respect for all.
- This policy aims to produce a consistent school response to any bullying incidents that may occur.
- We aim to make all those connected with our school aware of our opposition to bullying, and we make clear each person's responsibilities with regard to the eradication of bullying in our school.

Definition of Bullying

“Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, 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)

There are various definitions of bullying, however the key points are that it is unwanted, aggressive behaviour by an individual or group, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

Bullying is targeted, intentional and repetitive. It can take many forms (for example verbal, social, physical and cyber-bullying). It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups or because of a protected characteristic, for example on grounds of race, religion, culture, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between pupils or perceived differences. Bullying can be direct (either physical or verbal) or indirect (for example, being ignored, rumour spreading, being excluded deliberately or not spoken to, or through cyber-technology - social media, gaming, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email). Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time and can involve everyone – students and parents. Bullying can cause psychological damage, eating disorders and even suicide. Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence, some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be deemed a criminal offence.

Bullying is likely to involve an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim (whether actual or perceived). This can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance or by having access to the support of a group. It can result in the intimidation of a person through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Bullying is not confined solely to relationships between young people. Verbal and emotional bullying in particular may occur between staff or staff and parents, staff and pupils, or parents and children. All members of our school community have a responsibility to prevent such occurrences of bullying.

Bullying affects the whole school community: pupils, their families, teachers, support staff and governors. Primarily it threatens the safety and happiness of the pupils and may undermine their educational achievement.

Bullying is specific unacceptable behaviour, and as such is totally alien to our school ethos and aims. By raising awareness and working together, according to the guidelines laid down in this policy, we can hope to deal with bullying effectively and send a clear message to all concerned that bullying of any kind will not be tolerated at The Laurels School.

Our success will be tested not by the absence of problems but by the way we deal with them when they arise.

Signs of bullying

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that they are being bullied. If you are concerned and become aware of any of the following, you should ask if someone is threatening or bullying your child.

Signs and behaviours may include:

- Unwillingness to go to school or doing poorly in their school work
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet.
- Diminished levels of self-confidence.
- Becoming distressed, stopped eating
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival in class.
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact.
- Talking of suicide or running away.
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly going missing, or being damaged.
- Frequent symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches.
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Changes to established habits (e.g. giving up co-curricular activities, changes to accent or vocabulary).
- Cry themselves to sleep or have nightmares and call out 'leave me alone'
- Choosing the company of adults.
- Refusing to say what's wrong and giving improbable excuses to explain any of the above

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

It is important to understand the difference between bullying and conflict. For example, it is not considered bullying if pupils exclude someone on the playground now and then, however intentional exclusion can be bullying. A pupil communicating their dislike of another pupil is not considered bullying, as long as they do not start rumours or verbally abuse another pupil. A pupil unintentionally bumping into or tripping another pupil is not considered bullying, as long as it is not deliberate and repetitive. Arguments between pupils will inevitably happen at school and these are not considered bullying.

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, against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself.’

The DfE recommends three documents as guidance for preventing and responding to cyberbullying: Preventing and tackling bullying (2017), Cyber bullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff (2014), and Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying (2014).

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 pupils children conduct real-time conversations online.
7. Bullying via websites – use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal polling sites.

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

Bullying Outside the School Premises

Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises 'to such an extent as is reasonable'. This can relate to bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport or outside the local shops. Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on.

Supporting victims of bullying

We have a responsibility to support victims of bullying and make appropriate provision for their needs. The nature and level of support will depend on the individual circumstances and the level of need. These can include a quiet word from a teacher that knows the pupil well, asking their tutor to provide support, seeking guidance from counsellors, engaging with parents, referring to local authority children's services or to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Pupils who are being bullied are often too frightened to tell others. However, they are encouraged to inform their parents, class teacher, tutor or one of the Designate Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) if they feel that they are being victimised or bullied in any way.

Pupils should be encouraged to speak openly by our showing that we are concerned and want to help and support them. Promises should not be made to keep anything secret but the child should be reassured that we will help them sort out the problem.

If a pupil is a perpetual 'victim' of bullying by different groups or individuals we will try to observe the pupil's reactions to others when talking or playing to see if they are being bullied for any perceived 'bad' habits. We will help them to change this behavior, if appropriate, and develop better social skills and confidence.

Other ways our school community helps include encouraging a pupil's self-esteem, giving them responsibilities to help them feel valued and important, encouraging them to do things they are good at and by praising their achievements.

Removing bullied pupils from school, even for a short time, disrupts their education and can make it

difficult for them to reintegrate. We will therefore do all we can to ensure that bullied pupils feel safe and continue to attend school.

Raising awareness of bullying

We ensure that pupils are given the opportunities to gain awareness of the forms, consequences and solutions to bullying. We do this in several ways:

- The Character Education Programme (PSHCE) 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.
- Assemblies regularly address issues of friendship and personal relationships – including a special themed assembly for the Anti- Bullying Alliance Autumn Anti-Bullying week. This includes the role and nature of bystanders (see Appendix B)
- Through the curriculum pupils are encouraged to work well with one another, to be understanding of different characters and to resolve conflict in a constructive way. Bullying is addressed through their study of literature, history and the performing arts.
- Character Education & PSHE is reserved for general discussions about bullying, including the differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice-based language. Computing lessons are used to talk about online safety, cyber-bullying and reinforcing the school's E-Safety Policy.
- Personal tutors regularly talk with their tutees about their relationships with their peers, offering a 'sounding board' when difficulties arise and helping to mediate where required. This may include introducing pupils to strategies they can use to protect themselves from bullying (eg. by staying calm, being firm and walking away from a situation, and encouraging pupils to tell an adult or a friend what has happened).
- All staff are given, as part of their ongoing CPD, formation on how to detect signs of bullying or distress in a pupil and how to deal with it. They complete the Educare Online Bullying module in their first year in the school.
- Any disciplinary sanctions will reflect the seriousness of an incident and convey a deterrent effect
- Our staff have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaviour outside our school premises 'to such an extent as is reasonable'. Any such reported incidents of bullying will be investigated and acted on according to the procedures below.

Preventative Measures

Schools which excel at tackling bullying have created an ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat one another and the school staff with respect because they know that this is the right way to behave. That culture extends beyond the classroom to the corridors, the dining hall, the playground, and beyond the school gates including travel to and from school. Values of respect for staff and other pupils, an understanding of the value of education, and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others permeate the whole school environment and are reinforced by staff and older pupils who set a good example to the rest. (Preventing and Tackling Bullying: July 2017)

We take the following preventative measures in order to ensure that bullying does not become a problem within The Laurels School community:

- All new pupils are briefed thoroughly on the school's expected standards of behaviour. They are told what to do if they encounter bullying. We guarantee that whistle-blowers, who act in good faith, will not be penalised and will be supported.
- In their first few weeks at The Laurels School all new members of staff are given guidance on the school's anti-bullying policy and on how to react to allegations of bullying. They are required to read the School's policy as part of their induction.
- Our Tutors play an invaluable role in detecting and being alert to any possible signs of bullying, working with all pupils to encourage a spirit of respect and care for those around them. Tutors help pupils to develop strategies for difficult situations and liaise with parents when issues arise.
- We have a strong and experienced pastoral team, who are available to give confidential advice, counselling support to pupils and seek to encourage respect and understanding for others.
- The Head and SMT 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, 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.
- In line with our policy on whistle-blowing, all of our pupils are encouraged to tell a member of staff at once, in particular their Tutor, if they know that bullying is taking place.
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents. Records of any incidents are kept securely in the office of the Head in order that patterns of behaviour can be identified and monitored.

- We reserve the right to investigate incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips or that occur in the vicinity of the school, involving our pupils. We also reserve the right to check mobile phones and electronic devices when we feel it is necessary to do so.
- We encourage home/school links through the tutorial system and the termly parent-tutor meeting. We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of preventative measures.
- All staff watch for early signs of distress in pupils and report any such behaviour to the child's teacher, form teacher or, where relevant, to the DSL.

Preventative Measures – Cyber Bullying

With regard to cyber-bullying specifically, the Laurels School:

- 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.
- As part of the Parental Enrichment Programme, parents will receive advice and guidance on all aspects of emerging technologies.
- All staff receive e-safety training from the IT Manager, read and sign the E-Safety Acceptable Use Agreement.

Criminal Law

Making 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.

Procedures for Dealing with Reported Bullying

If an incident of bullying (including cyberbullying) is reported, the following procedures are adopted:

- The member of staff to whom it is reported or who first discovers the incident will control the situation and reassure and support the pupils involved.
- The member of SMT should immediately be made aware of any bullying problems by the tutors, form teachers and/or support staff. Similarly, parents should inform their child's form teacher and/or a member of SMT immediately if they have any concerns.
- 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 on ISams with any relevant documents signed and dated and then scanned and attached. The Head is made aware so she can monitor where required.
- Appropriate disciplinary sanctions will be applied with reference to The Laurels School Behaviour Policy.
- The parents of both victim and perpetrator 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 meeting involving all the parties, with close staff supervision (usually a member of SMT) could be helpful in developing a strategy for all concerned to close the episode.)
- A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place. All staff (including tutors) will be informed by the SMT and asked to be extra vigilant at break times and report back to the form teacher, Head or and a member of SMT if further conflict occurs.

- In very serious cases, and only after the Head and Senior Management Team have been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to Social Services. However, it is the policy of the Laurels School to attempt to resolve such issues internally under the School's own disciplinary procedures, 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.
- Records contained within the Incidents file will be reviewed periodically by the Head to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's approach to bullying and enable any patterns to be identified. The Head and a member of SMT will agree a strategy with relevant staff to remedy these.

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 pupils 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 pupils 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 Head's office; and an entry in the Bullying Register.
- Pupils will be told always to report incidents of bullying.

The role of staff

- All our staff take every form of bullying seriously, and seek to prevent it from taking place. When faced with a potential incident of bullying they follow the procedures outlined below with the support of the SMT and, where appropriate, the Head.
- Periodic training is provided to staff to ensure that the principles of this policy are understood, legal responsibilities are known, action is defined to resolve and prevent problems and sources of support are available. Where appropriate, specialised skills may be needed to understand the needs of particular pupils (for example LGBT or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities).
- If any of our teachers witness an act of bullying, they will usually investigate it themselves first. Our teachers and support staff do all they can to support the child who is being bullied. If a child continues to be bullied then, after consultation with the Head or another member of the SMT, the teacher will inform the child's parents. A written record will be started to monitor events as described above.
- When any bullying incident is seen or reported taking place between members of a class, the teachers will deal with the issue immediately. This may involve counselling and support for the victim of the bullying, and punishment for the child who has carried out the bullying. Time is spent talking to the child who has bullied: explaining why their action was wrong, and that child is encouraged to change their behaviour in future. Tutors are encouraged to be actively involved in this. If a pupil is involved in bullying other pupils, or depending on the seriousness of the offence, the Head or another member of the SMT will be informed.
- It is the Head's responsibility to implement the school anti-bullying strategy, and to ensure that all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the school policy, know how to identify and deal with incidents of bullying, and know what sanctions can be adopted. Suitable training is provided so that our staff are aware of what action should be taken in order to reduce the risk of bullying.
- The Head and SMT ensure that all our pupils understand the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders. They know that bullying is wrong, and that it is unacceptable behaviour in our school. Our teachers draw the attention of pupils to this fact at suitable moments. For example, if an incident occurs, they may decide to use an assembly as the forum in which to discuss with other pupils why this behaviour was wrong, and why a pupil is being punished. PSHE lessons also help to raise awareness of bullying.
- The Head and SMT foster a climate of mutual support and praise for success, so making bullying less likely. When pupils feel they are important and belong to a friendly and welcoming school, bullying is far less likely to be part of their behaviour.

- The Head and a member of SMT ensure that all pupils are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders. They know that bullying is wrong, and that it is unacceptable behaviour in this school.

Community Cohesion

The Laurels School's work on anti-bullying and anti-discrimination is an aspect of the community cohesion duty. DfE guidance for schools on the duty to promote community cohesion states that: 'In line with existing duties, all schools should have effective approaches in place to deal with incidents of prejudice, discrimination, bullying and harassment. Monitoring of whether pupils from particular groups are more likely to be excluded or disciplined than others should be accompanied by appropriate behaviour and discipline policies in place to deal with this, and pupils should be involved in evaluating the success of a school in implementing these policies.'

The Laurels School ensures that all stakeholders' views are heard. Therefore, The Laurels School, as part of its evaluation and monitoring schedule, ensures that the pupils' and parents' voices are heard through questionnaires, interviews and the class council, in order to form and shape the School's anti-bullying policy and procedures.

Complaints Procedure

Parents and pupils are encouraged to use our Complaints Procedure if they feel that their concerns about bullying, or any other matter, are not being addressed properly.

Monitoring and review

Our Governors acknowledge their responsibility to ensure that this policy is effectively implemented and meets all current regulatory requirements.

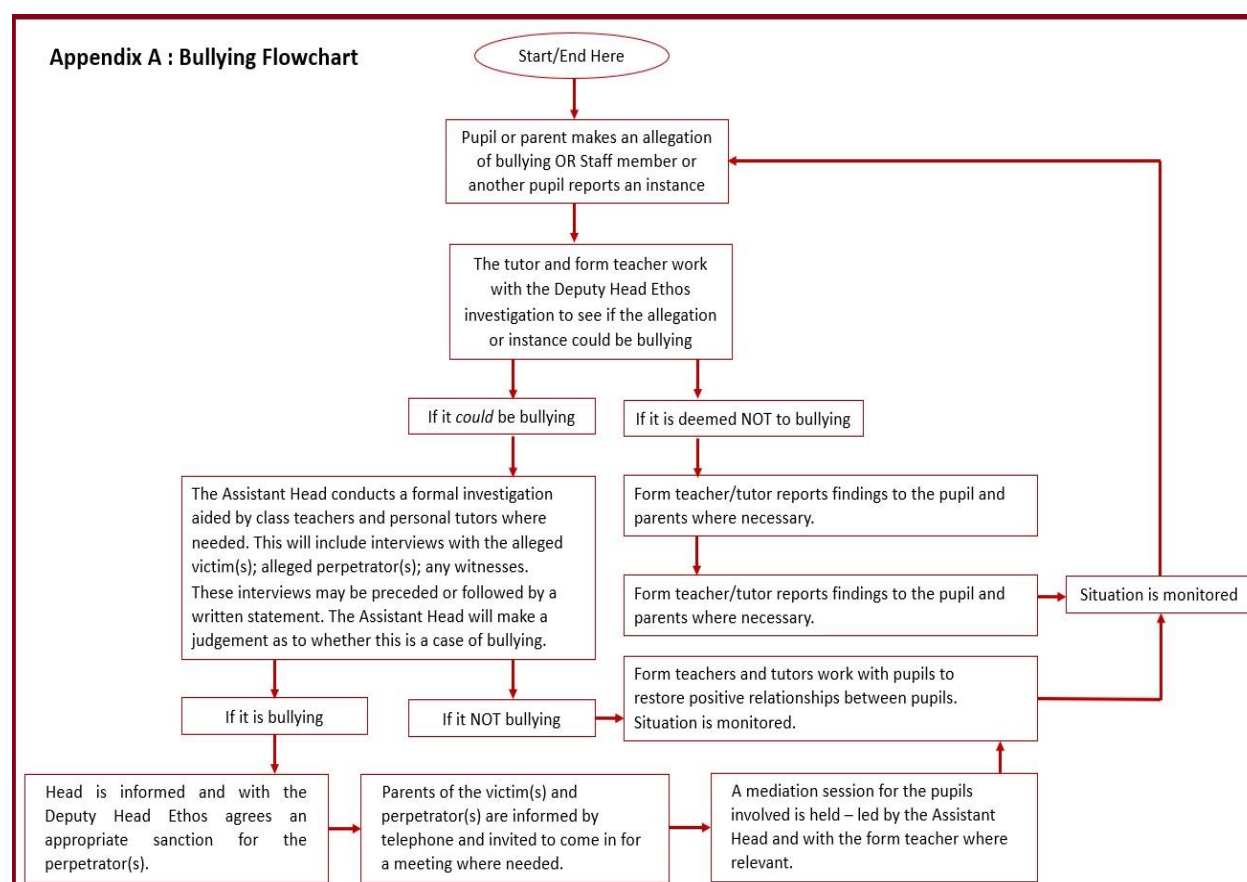
This policy is reviewed bi-annually, however it may be amended earlier if legislation or our school procedures change.

This policy is monitored on a day-to-day basis by our Head and SMT. In order to readily have a clear picture of bullying incidents throughout our school and to ensure that our policy is being effectively implemented, the number and nature of concerns are discussed and monitored regularly.

Signed: Linda Sanders

This policy is reviewed bi-annually	
Title	Anti-Bullying Policy
Version	4
Review Date	Autumn 2022
Author	Linda Sanders
Approved by SMT	Yes
Approval/Review required by PACT or sub-committee	Yes
Latest Review (state whether changes were made)	Yes
Next Review Date	Autumn 2024

Appendix A: Bullying Flowchart of bullying.



Appendix B: Bystanders

Bystanders, this section added, with thanks to the Eyes on Bullying project:
<http://www.eyesonbullying.org/>

Bullying situations usually involve more than the bully and the victim. They also involve bystanders— those who watch bullying happen or hear about it. An important new strategy for bullying prevention focuses on the powerful role of the bystander. Depending on how bystanders respond, they can either contribute to the problem or the solution. Bystanders rarely play a completely neutral role, although they may think they do.

Hurtful Bystanders

Some bystanders . . . instigate the bullying by prodding the bully to begin.

Other bystanders . . . encourage the bullying by laughing, cheering, or making comments that further stimulate the bully.

And other bystanders . . . join in the bullying once it has begun.

Most bystanders . . . passively accept bullying by watching and doing nothing. Often without realizing it, these bystanders also contribute to the problem. Passive bystanders provide the

audience a bully craves and the silent acceptance that allows bullies to continue their hurtful behaviour.

Helpful Bystanders

Bystanders also have the power to play a key role in preventing or stopping bullying.

Some bystanders . . . directly intervene, by discouraging the bully, defending the victim, or redirecting the situation away from bullying.

Other bystanders . . . get help, by rallying support from peers to stand up against bullying or by reporting the bullying to adults.

Examining the Effects on The Bystander

Why don't more bystanders intervene?

They think, "It's none of my business."

They fear getting hurt or becoming another victim. They feel powerless to stop the bully.

They don't like the victim or believe the victim "deserves" it. They don't want to draw attention to themselves.

They fear retribution.

They think that telling adults won't help or it may make things worse. They don't know what to do.

Bystanders who don't intervene or don't report the bullying often suffer negative consequences themselves. They may experience:

- Pressure to participate in the bullying
- Anxiety about speaking to anyone about the bullying
- Powerlessness to stop bullying
- Vulnerability to becoming victimised
- Fear of associating with the victim, the bully, or the bully's friends
- Guilt for not having defended the victim
- Preparing Children to Become Helpful Bystander

Adults can prepare children to become helpful bystanders by discussing with them the different ways bystanders can make a difference, and by letting them know that adults will support them, if and when they step forward. Adults can also provide examples of how helpful bystanders have shown courage and made a difference in real-life situations and in their own experiences

