



YORK HOUSE

Anti-Bullying Policy

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T. 01923 772395
www.york-house.com
@YorkHouseSch

Aims and Objectives

To improve the safety, happiness, performance and attendance of pupils

To demonstrate that the school takes bullying seriously and that bullying behaviour and deeds are unacceptable and will not be tolerated

To take measures to prevent all forms of bullying in the school and off-site activities

To protect those who might be bullied

To promote upstanding and an environment where pupils feel safe to report to someone about bullying

To educate those who bully others as to why their behaviour is unacceptable, giving them the opportunity to reflect and take responsibility for their actions so that the bullying behaviour ceases as well as helping them to make more positive decisions in the future.

To promote positive attitudes and behaviours in all pupils, encouraging a culture of empathy, respect and understanding towards others

It is clear that there is no place for bullying and bullies in such an environment. Although bullying is rare at York House, it would be wrong to assume that bullying does not exist here; such complacency would be not only inappropriate but could lead to unnecessary suffering on the part of pupils in our care. Pupils and their parents have the right to expect us to do what is in our power in order to achieve our aims.

Please read this policy in line with these other policies/guidance:

Safeguarding, Welfare of Children and Child Protection Policy

Behaviour Policy

Online Safety Policy

Peer on Peer abuse Guidelines

Learning Support Policy

What is Bullying?

Bullying is difficult to define, but broadly, it is repeated, targeted and antisocial behaviour on the part of an individual (or group) directed at another individual (or group), with the intention to harm. There is often a power imbalance and the victim is perceived as vulnerable. It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups on, for example, the grounds of appearance, race, religion, culture, sexual orientation, gender, homophobia, special education needs and disabilities or because a child is adopted, or is perhaps, a carer. It takes many forms and can include emotional, verbal, physical and sexual abuse and may occur directly or indirectly as well as through cyber-technology including social media, mobile phones, texting, photographs and email.

There are typically five key components to bullying:

- There is an intention to harm: bullying is deliberate behaviour that sets out to upset and cause distress.
- There is a harmful outcome: one or more people are hurt physically or emotionally.
- It is persistent and repeated: bullying involves repeated acts of aggression and hostility. An isolated aggressive attack between equals is not bullying.
- It is direct or indirect: bullying can involve direct acts of aggression, such as hitting someone, as well as indirect acts, such as spreading rumours.
- There is unequal power: bullying involves the abuse of power by one or several people who are more powerful or perceived as being more powerful, often due to their age, physical strength, belonging to a majority group or psychological resilience.

If bullying is deemed to cause significant harm then the school may involve social services or even the police. Please refer to the Safeguarding Policy for further information.

The Seriousness of Bullying

Bullying is likely to cause serious psychological harm to the victim. Although there are as of yet no laws applicable there may well be the possible litigation with regard to harassment. As a result, the school's disciplinary sanctions will reflect the seriousness of the situation and are designed to have a deterrent effect. At all times in the process, the perpetrator's response to these sanctions will be monitored, with further, more serious sanctions possible if the bullying continues.

Bullying may take many forms and can include emotional, physical, cyber-bullying, sexual or verbal bullying. Many of us experience conflict in our relationships and friendship fall-outs, but in most cases, this does not amount to persistent bullying that seriously affects our health and well-being.

Emotional Bullying

Verbal examples of emotional bullying might include making offensive remarks or name-calling. These remarks could be based on:

- physical appearance
- gender
- sexuality or sexual orientation
- race
- religious belief
- ability or achievement.
- disability

Remarks might be mocking or taunting in nature; these remarks might include the spreading of rumours or gossip about a child with other children. Bullying behaviour might also involve excluding a child from social or activity groups; threats and intimidation; manipulation; tormenting; ridiculing or humiliating. The sending of hurtful text messages by mobile telephone or e-mail; the taking of or damage caused to a child's belongings in order to cause distress.

Banter

Teasing is common among friendship groups and families. For the one doing the teasing, it is a playful way of provoking a reaction, usually without an intention or desire to cause hurt.

It is important however that we support children to communicate when they feel a joke has gone too far. Even amongst family members and friendship groups, it is possible to cross a line and offend or hurt a person's feelings. Banter can also be used as a way of reinforcing established group or social 'norms' and as such, can at times be discriminatory and create an unsafe environment, even if it is not a bullying situation. It is therefore vital to explain to children from a young age the difference between playful, harmless teasing, and that which can cause offence and harm.

Physical Bullying

This might include kicking, hitting, pinching or pushing with the intention of physically hurting the child.

The intended effect of bullying is generally one or more of the following: intimidation, coercion, isolation, subjugation and exploitation. It always has at its root the misuse of power and the exploitation of a (perceived) weakness.

It is worth remembering that not all acts of aggression or negative behaviours towards others are necessarily bullying. Although such actions are unacceptable and should result in consequences, as long as they do not form part of a pattern, or meet the criteria outlined in this policy, they may not be deemed as bullying.

Please also see the Restraint, Physical Contact and Intervention Policy

Cyber-bullying

What is Cyber-Bullying?

There are many types of cyber-bullying. Although there may be some of which we are unaware. Here are the more common ones.

Text messages –that are threatening or cause discomfort - also included here is “Bluejacking” (the sending of anonymous text messages over short distances using “Bluetooth” wireless technology);

2. Picture/video-clips via mobile phone cameras - images sent to others to make the victim feel threatened or embarrassed;

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. Chatroom bullying – menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in web-based chatrooms; trolling.

6. Instant messaging (IM) – unpleasant messages sent while children conduct real-time conversations online using MSM (Microsoft Messenger) or Yahoo Chat - although there are others.

7. Bullying via social networking – use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal “own web space” sites such as Bebo (which works by signing on in one’s school, therefore making it easy to find a victim), Facebook and Myspace - although there are others.

At York House, we take this bullying as seriously as all other types of bullying and, therefore, will deal with each situation individually. An episode may result in a simple verbal warning. It might result in a parental discussion. Clearly, more serious cases will result in further sanctions.

The school does not allow the use of mobile phones. If a pupil has to have a mobile phone they are asked to hand it into the office at the beginning of the day. The use of mobile telephones to bully other pupils, whether within or outside school, will lead to the bullies being subject to the measures described within this Anti-Bullying Policy. Equally so the pupils are not allowed to bring in any other devices such as Ipads or personal computers. E-books are allowed. (The exception to this is coordinated through the school Learning Support Department, where some pupils may bring their own kindle device into school for reading.

At York House we take into consideration that technology allows the user to bully anonymously or from an unknown location, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Cyber-bullying leaves no physical scars so it is, perhaps, less evident to a parent or teacher, but it is highly intrusive and the hurt it causes can be very severe.

Therefore, we share the following advice with our pupils:

If you are being bullied by phone or the Internet:

Remember, bullying is never your fault.

It can be stopped and it can usually be traced.

Don't ignore the bullying.

Tell someone you trust, such as a teacher or parent, or call an advice line.

Try to keep calm.

If you are frightened, try to show it as little as possible.

Don't get angry, it will only make the person bullying you more likely to continue.

Don't give out your personal details online

If you're in a chatroom, watch what you say about where you live, the school you go to, your email address etc.

See Online Safety Guidelines

The school operates a filtering system monitored by the IT support, as well as on internal devices through Impero word capture.

Parents are encouraged, through the newsletter, and other forms of communication (Curriculum Evening) to report any concerns over bullying and provide any evidence to the school via their child's Form Tutor, Pastoral Assistant Head or the Deputy Head. Pupils and parents have also been informed, through the Head of ICT, of various concerns about specific sites and apps through assemblies and information evenings.

The school provides safety information for the pupils and parents as noted in the internal calendar (21.01.22, 30.9.19, 18.01.17 & 2015)

The school makes reference to non-statutory DFE advice: 'Cyberbully: Advice for teachers and school staff' (2014) and 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for Headteachers, staff and governing bodies' (October 2014) and KCSiE (2022).

Guidance

What follows is a guide for staff to help identify and deal with bullying.

Identifying the Victim

Investigation:

Most teachers develop a “sixth sense” when it comes to the well being of their pupils and can spot problems easily. However, as a general guide, the victim of bullying may display all, some or none of the following:

Unexpected academic underachievement

Unexplained injuries

Changes to usual behaviour

Change in eating habits

Unwonted reticence

Tearfulness

Anxiousness

Low self-esteem

Non-specific “illness” presented to Matron

Social isolation or becoming withdrawn

Tiredness

Moodiness

Aggression

A desire to avoid school

Vulnerable Children: Staff are aware of vulnerable children and ensure they are giving these children support.

Disclosure: The victim might confide in a fellow pupil, teacher, or other adult members of the school staff or his parent, who then contacts the form teacher, Deputy Headmaster or Headmaster.

Witness: A third party, having observed the bullying taking place reports it to a member of staff.

Dealing with Bullying

Our Preventative Approach:

The most effective way of dealing with bullying is to raise awareness and create a supportive atmosphere of care and consideration in which it cannot flourish. The school aims to build a culture of kindness, respect, understanding, inclusion and empathy. Our school ethos and values reflect this, they are promoted and reinforced through our pupil aims and RULER. (see behaviour policy)

Open communication between all staff is strongly encouraged to share any concerns both informally and during sectional meetings. Form tutors and Heads of Section are encouraged to keep logs of incidents to build patterns of potential bullying behaviour and collate evidence to make meaningful and positive interventions. There is a weekly PLT (pastoral leadership team) meeting where any incidents are raised, patterns are identified and plans moving forward are formulated and actioned.

We also aim to:

Involve parents to ensure that they are clear that the school does not tolerate bullying and are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being bullied. Parents should feel confident that the school will take any complaint about bullying seriously and resolve the issue in a way that protects the child, and they reinforce the value of good behaviour at home

- Involve pupils. All pupils should understand the school's approach and are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders
- Regularly evaluate and update our approach to take account of developments in technology, for instance updating 'acceptable use' policies for computers
- Openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related difference.
- Use specific organisations or resources for help with particular problems. Such as drawing on the experience and expertise of anti-bullying organisations
- Provide effective staff training. Anti-bullying policies are most effective when all school staff understand the principles and purpose of the school's policy, its legal responsibilities regarding bullying, how to resolve problems, and where to seek support.
- Make it easy for pupils to report bullying so that they are assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted on.
- Create an inclusive environment. Schools should create a safe environment where pupils can openly discuss the cause of their bullying, without fear of further bullying or discrimination
- Celebrate success. Celebrating success is an important way of creating a positive school ethos around the issue.

Pupils across the school, with the help of our school council, have also collaborated to come up with our own whole school anti-bullying pledge:

We make a commitment to stand up against bullying,

We will treat others with respect and kindness,

We will all have the compassion and empathy not to be a bully and the courage to be upstanders not bystanders,

We believe that everybody has the right to feel safe, included, valued and accepted regardless of differences,

It is our responsibility to help others being bullied and report bullying,

We all pledge to stand up against bullying whenever and wherever we see it.

In order to further reinforce and promote this culture these themes are promoted on a regular basis. Pupils are also helped to acquire confidence and assertiveness skills that can help them respond to a bullying situation. This includes the use of body language to show others they are confident and self-assured, and the use of assertive language to stop someone who is trying to hurt or embarrass them. These themes and skills are developed and discussed in Form Periods, PSHE sessions, school assemblies and by taking part in nationwide initiatives, such as the anti-bullying week. Creating an atmosphere of trust, support and openness will help develop confidence and minimise the risk of the victim suffering in silence.

All pupils are encouraged to feel responsible for spotting and reporting bullying as upstanders. As part of the education of, and discussion with pupils, it is essential that they are encouraged to watch for and report any actions which may constitute bullying.

Awareness through assemblies and PSHE lessons needs to be raised of the issues involved:

- The distress and potential harm to the victim
- The moral unfairness of victimisation
- The social unacceptability of bullying
- The importance of all children recognising their responsibility as upstanders.

All adult members of York House School's community need to be vigilant in order to spot the child who appears to be unhappy and/or alone without apparent cause. Bullying behaviour can be experienced anywhere and at any time, not just when pupils are not directly supervised, but even, on occasion, in lessons, in front of the teacher.

Our Reactive Approach:

With all incidents of bullying the ultimate goal must always be for the bullying behaviour to stop and for the target to feel safe. Children and young people are growing and developing. They will make mistakes and will need your help to live up to the community values, to manage their own behaviour, and to grow in empathy towards others. We must help all children involved in bullying behaviour to understand that it is unacceptable and that they must take responsibility for their actions, stop and make amends.

The aim of our reactive processes are to challenge and stop any incidents of bullying by setting out clear procedures and ensuring all are aware of the procedures involved. We incorporate monitoring and evaluation systems to ensure the policy is consistently applied.

The Victim

It is important to act swiftly and decisively when bullying comes to light through any of the routes mentioned above.

When the disclosure comes from a parent, the parent should be reassured that the matter will be investigated according to this policy and that they will be contacted within a specified time (preferably no longer than forty-eight hours) with an update. A record of the conversation with the parent should be kept. Sometimes a parent will request that their child should remain unaware of the parent's intervention.

It should be borne in mind that judgment as to the point at which a type of behaviour has become unacceptable and can be designated "bullying" is largely the prerogative of the victim. The victim's feelings and wishes should be respected when it comes to dealing with potentially delicate situations. They may ask that no action be taken for fear of reprisals. Explain that the problem rarely goes away without action on the part of a third party and point out that the bully may need some help too. Explain what action you intend to take and satisfy yourself that this action is not going to cause them further distress. They should be reassured that the bullying will stop and that there will be no repercussions. It is, in any event, not acceptable to do nothing.

The victim should be asked to write an account of the bullying incidents with details including names, places, the nature of the bullying and the dates where possible. They should include details of any defensive actions they may have taken. If this is not felt to be possible or appropriate, the teacher should record the details themselves and ask the victim to sign the document.

Corroboration should be sought, where at all possible, from other pupils or staff who witnessed the incidents with their accounts recorded.

The Bully

Timing is essential in dealing with the aggressor. They will be spoken to at the earliest opportunity. Again, it is possible to act without incriminating the victim; aggressors can easily be convinced that the information did not come from the victim and that all the victim did was to confirm reluctantly what you already knew. The aggressor will also write an account of their actions, giving details and an explanation of their motives from their perspective. They may continue to protest their innocence but will, nonetheless, be told in unequivocal terms that there is to be absolutely no attempt on their part further to threaten or intimidate the victim. Failure to comply will result in further more serious sanctions.

A bully will automatically be subject to the measures described in the Behaviour Policy. If the staff involved feel that interventions and monitoring alone will not solve the situation, then sanctions as set out in the school's behaviour policy can be used. This could include a warning, stripe, or in extreme, persistent cases internal suspension, suspension or expulsion.

In spite of the unpleasant nature of their actions, bullies often need help to understand that what they have done is wrong. Bullying behaviour is also symptomatic of deep-seated, sometimes unacknowledged unhappiness. These things need to be in our minds when dealing with the bully. This will typically involve discussion, not just of particular details of the matter at hand, but also the related issues such as family, friends and future.

An eventual rapprochement between bully and victim may be seen as a desirable outcome.

Procedure for the recording and reporting of bullying

The school operates a culture of reporting 'bullying' behaviour. This is endorsed through assemblies, PSHE and in Form times. Pupils are encouraged to report any such behaviour to their Form Tutor, staff member or person in their support network that they feel comfortable confiding to. Training has occurred from specialist staff (INSET days). Heads of section are encouraged to keep detailed records of all reported incidents as evidence to identify potential patterns of bullying.

This referral information will be discussed with the Form Teacher, the Deputy Headmaster or the Headmaster. Once the incident has been discussed by members of the pastoral team it must be decided how the incident will be dealt with and the Pastoral Assistant Head, Deputy Headmaster or Headmaster would liaise with the teacher and decide on an appropriate course of action. If the incident was considered particularly serious, or the bully failed to change their behaviour despite clear guidance from staff, the parents of all children concerned would be contacted.

When the matter has been resolved then a copy of all notes and minutes taken about the incident is added to the child's file kept in the school office.

Incidents of bullying are recorded and logged in the bullying logs by the Heads of Section on iSAMS. Heads of Section meet with the Pastoral Assistant Head and Deputy Headmaster who will scrutinise for any overriding patterns of bullying. Patterns may include areas of bullying and pupils involved.

Teachers should not hesitate to seek advice from others who may have dealt with similar problems, such as the Pastoral Assistant Head, Deputy Headmaster, The Child Protection Officer or the Headmaster.

As teachers, we should not discount the possibility that we may unwittingly be causing pupils to feel uncomfortable in the classroom and we should consider carefully the effect of our own words and actions. We may be providing useful ammunition for a potential bully. Any serious claim by a pupil that he/she feels bullied by a member of staff will be referred directly to the Headmaster for investigation.

If an incident of bullying is deemed to cause significant harm then this will be reported to social services or even the police if required, in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

Staff Training

Staff training will be arranged as a programme of staff development, which will include anti-bullying strategies, raising awareness of staff through training, taking action to reduce risk of bullying at times and in places where it is most likely. Staff have also had child on child training planned as part of the Safeguarding CPD.

Bullying which occurs outside school premises

School staff members have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises. Sections 90 and 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 say that a school's disciplinary powers can be used to address pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff, but only if it would be reasonable for the school to regulate pupils' behaviour in those circumstances. This may include bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The head teacher should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or pose a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

While school staff members have the power to discipline pupils for bullying that occurs outside school, they can only impose the disciplinary sanction and implement that

sanction on the school premises or when the pupil is under the lawful control of school staff, for instance on a school trip.

Anti-Bullying Policy at a Glance

When Bullying is reported

Parents/Child/Upstanders inform form teacher or trusted member of staff directly, who may take over at this point.

Speak to the victim; seek their approval for action you intend to take.

Speak to the bully and tell them that their actions must stop, there is to be no reprisal or revenge. Warn of the serious consequences of disobedience.

Keep written records of conversations with parents and the pupils' accounts of events.

Where the victim and bully are in the same classes or share break times, inform all relevant teachers, who can keep them apart.

Follow up with discussion, checking that the bullying has stopped and all involved are supported.

This policy has taken notice of the DfE non-statutory advice, 'Preventing and tackling bullying' July 2017

Signed by:



Headmaster

Date: September 2025

Signed by



Chair of Governors

Date: September 2025

Please see the Policy Review Matrix for the next review date