



## Anti-Bullying Policy

### ***There is no place for bullying at Kimbolton School***

Kimbolton School aims to be a caring community. All members of that community are, individually and collectively, responsible for the wellbeing of others. We aim to create a culture and environment in which pupils and staff are treated equitably regardless of race, ethnic origin, nationality, gender, disability, age, religion, sexual orientation, marital/parental status, political belief and socio-economic group, focusing on their Protected Characteristics. Kimbolton School adheres to the content and requirements of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' September 2023 (KCSIE), 'Working Together To Safeguard Children' 2018 (WTTSC), The National Minimum Standards for boarding schools (where applicable) and the Prevent Duty 2015.

The School acknowledges the positive role of school management, teaching and support staff, parents and pupils in confronting bullying. The School accepts the need to develop a whole-school approach to handling bullying and the need to make the whole school community - pupils, parents, staff and Governors - cognisant of bullying behaviour and its impact. The School has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

#### **What is bullying?**

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

Bullying is an action intended to hurt another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim. It can cause long term psychological damage and, in some cases, can be a contributing factor in suicide (harassment and threatening behaviour are also criminal offences). Bullying takes place when it is repeated over time and intentionally hurts another pupil or group. It may occur directly or through cyber-technology (see *Anti-Cyber Bullying* section below).

Bullying can be:

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures), humiliation
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, any form of violence, threats
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing
- Racist - racial taunts/abuse, graffiti, gestures
- Religious
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive/chauvinist comments
- Homophobic - because of, or focussing on, the issue of sexuality (the School recognising and acting upon the greater risks for LGBTQ+ pupils and those perceived to be), taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Targeted at those with particular needs (e.g. pupils or adults with physical or mental disabilities)
- Cyber - all areas of the internet, such as email and internet chat room misuse, mobile phone threats by sending abusive or threatening text messaging and calls, misuse of associated technology, e.g. camera & video equipment, or posting abusive or negative comments about individuals via social media (see *Anti-Cyber Bullying* section below too).

Relationships and friendships within school can be the cause of unhappiness and upset to a pupil when they go wrong. The School endeavours to respond to issues which arise from this through a variety of means, including Tutor and Housemaster/Housemistress support in the Senior School, and Headmaster/Senior Deputy Head/Form Tutors in the Preparatory School, as well as the discussion of friendship issues as part of the PSHE programme. The School is a caring and welcoming environment where pupils are encouraged to discuss issues and to support each other. There is open discussion of the issue of bullying and the promotion of an understanding of what constitutes bullying. All members of the School community understand that an allegation of bullying is serious and that bullying will not be tolerated. It is accepted that bullying can cause psychological damage. Staff are aware of child-on-child abuse and any concerns relating to this will be directed to the DSP Team.

Bullying is child-on-child abuse, which is defined as abuse by one or more pupils against another pupil. It can be standalone or as part of wider abuse and can happen both inside and outside of school, and online. Further information about child-on-child abuse, including the procedures to follow when an incident of child-on-child abuse is reported, can be found in the School's *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*.

### **Signs of bullying**

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to return to school
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually poor work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with, or spoilt by others
- Books, bags, money, and other belongings suddenly go "missing", or are damaged
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary)
- Diminished levels of self-confidence
- Frequent visits to the Medical Centre with symptoms which may relate to stress or anxiety, such as stomach pains or headaches
- Unexplained cuts and bruises;
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, or late arrival to class
- Choosing the company of adults rather than peers
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping or experiencing nightmares
- Talking of suicide or running away from home or school
- Change in appearance
- Complaining about missing possessions

Although there may be other causes of some of the above symptoms, a repetition or combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers and reported/recorded, as appropriate, in accordance with this policy.

### **What the School will do?**

## ***It is everyone's responsibility to stop bullying***

The School promotes an "always tell" ethos amongst its pupils, parents and staff. All incidents are followed through, and every effort is made to protect any pupils who are connected to the allegation from becoming victims of bullying themselves. Our zero-tolerance approach does not mean 'one strike and you're out' but it does mean that any demonstrated incidents of harassment or bullying will be regarded seriously.

In the event of an observed or reported instance of bullying between Kimbolton pupils, the facts will be ascertained from the victim(s), alleged perpetrator(s) and witness(es). A record will be made of who was

involved, what happened, when and where, as soon after the instance was reported as possible (whether that is in or out of school time). This will be passed to the relevant Housemaster/Housemistress (or Form Teacher at the Preparatory School), who will liaise with the Senior Deputy Head (Senior Deputy Head/Headmaster at the Preparatory School).

The School endeavours to create a culture in which incidents of bullying are reported immediately. Pupils have access to a variety of options when reporting bullying (e.g. at the Senior School - Gown Prefects, Ingrams Prefects, Tutor, teachers, Housemaster/Housemistress, and members of the Senior Leadership Team). Pupils are regularly reminded of these options (e.g. in PSHE and at House Assemblies). The pupil Code of Conduct (to be found within the School's Term Calendar booklet) enshrines the importance of creating an environment of good behaviour and respect. All pupils carry the Code of Conduct in their Calendar where expectations include "treat all members of the school community with due respect". Staff awareness of bullying is raised by separate points at staff meetings, Housemaster/Housemistress meetings and in Tutor meetings.

### **When an incident occurs**

The School will endeavour to keep parents of those pupils involved informed if and when it may be dealing with a significant bullying situation. Parents are asked to let the School (normally the Form Teacher (Preparatory School), Tutor or the Housemaster/Housemistress (Senior School Hms), in the first instance) know directly if they have cause for concern, either on behalf of their own children or because of rumours about incidents involving others. The School will handle information discreetly, and while it will usually inform all interested parties of the situation, it will not do so without careful consultation first.

Once investigated, every effort will be made to resolve the problem through counselling of both parties, which will seek to support the victim(s) and change the behaviour of the perpetrator(s). In proven cases parents will be informed. This process will normally be carried out by the pupil's Housemaster/Housemistress and/or the Senior Deputy Head (Senior School) or the Headmaster/Senior Deputy Head of the Preparatory School.

For all incidents of bullying (whether isolated or occurring over a period of time), disciplinary sanctions will normally be applied, and this may extend to suspension or - in the gravest cases – expulsion/requirement to leave. Counselling may, however, be maintained for both parties even after sanctions have been applied. See *Behaviour and Discipline Policy* for further details of sanctions.

This policy applies in respect of all dealings between members of the School (not just on site or during school hours), which in the opinion of the School impact, or may impact, upon their conduct at school or upon the reputation of the School.

The School regularly tackles the subject of bullying in assemblies, displays around the school site, liaison with external agencies, duty staff to monitor student's behaviour, lunchtime supervisors to monitor students during social time and PSHE lessons as well as inviting external speakers to address year groups on this issue. The Senior Deputy Headmaster and Hms regularly monitor, analyse and review data on bullying. These reports are communicated to the Governing Body via the Headmaster's Report.

It is made clear that 'turning a blind eye' to bullying is completely unacceptable. Records are maintained by the Senior Deputy Heads (Preparatory and Senior School) of bullying incidents so that any patterns or 'crux points' can be identified. The Senior Deputy Head in the Senior School, for example, maintains a Bullying Log electronically.

A *Grievance Procedure* applies for staff who wish to complain about bullying in the workplace.

## **Anti-Cyber Bullying**

In addition to the expectations and sanctions outlined within this policy, the School recognises that Cyber Bullying is an increasingly common and serious phenomenon. The purpose of this section of the policy is to make clear the School's response to a report of cyber bullying and is applied in line with the School's *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy* and KCSiE 2023.

### Definitions

Cyber Bullying is different to other forms of bullying because it can happen at any time of day outside of the School grounds in places previously regarded as safe e.g. home. The audience for electronically circulated messages can be large and circulation is hard to control. The bully and the bullied may never be in the same physical space so Cyber Bullying can appear anonymous.

Cyber Bullying can take place between people of different ages and generations including teachers and being a bystander makes someone an accessory to bullying although it is recognised that in some instances this will be unintentional.

Cyber Bullying includes the malicious use of:

- Mobile phones
- Instant messaging and wider social media
- Chat rooms and message boards
- Video hosting sites such as YouTube
- Social networking sites such as Facebook
- Webcams
- Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs)
- Gaming sites, consoles and virtual worlds

Cyber Bullying potentially falls foul of a number of laws, including those concerning harassment, threatening behaviour, and defamation. In addition, the Headmaster and the Head of the Preparatory School have powers under the 2006 Education and Inspections Act to reasonably regulate the conduct of pupils when they are off-site and to confiscate (for a limited period) items such as mobile phones.

### What the School will do

The School is proactive in preventing Cyber Bullying through the inclusion of the topic in PSHE lessons for each year group, its Pupil Acceptable Use Agreement (PAUA) for ICT, its monitoring of ICT use in school and its internet safety awareness programme. Pupils are encouraged to report anything which concerns them. The School is aware that the technologies available to pupils are constantly changing and, as a result, the School's provision to prevent Cyber Bullying is reviewed annually.

All incidences of Cyber Bullying will be investigated by the School and the investigation carefully recorded with evidence being retained.

On receiving a report of Cyber Bullying either in or outside of School, the School will:

- Reassure the person making the disclosure that the issue will be investigated with discretion.
- Advise the person making the complaint on how to prevent further instances and also how to keep the relevant evidence.
- Investigate the allegation, collecting as much information as possible.
- Take action to prevent the further circulation of the material e.g. if the person responsible is a pupil in School then the School, through the member of the DSP team responsible for overseeing Cyber Bullying issues, will supervise the immediate removal of content.

When the bully has been identified, the School will (depending of the severity of the incident) follow a number of steps:

In the first instance:

The bully will be seen by their Hm and the member of the DSP team responsible for overseeing Cyber Bullying issues, or the Head of the Preparatory School, to ensure that they understand the seriousness of their actions and the effect on the victim. Further action will then be taken to both punish the bully and ensure that their behaviour changes. Such punishment could include a verbal warning, limited internet access, prohibiting the use of mobile phones in school, detention or suspension.

In more serious cases, the School may:

Contact the parents of the bully and the victim.

Contact the host site or phone company to make a report.

Confiscate mobile phones or other devices used to Cyber Bully and ask for information on who else may be in possession of the material.

As per the School's *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*, the DSL is informed of bullying incidents when there is a reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

In most cases the School will deal with matters internally, but in very serious cases the School may refer the matter to the police and/or social care, for example when

- There is evidence of a serious criminal offence being or about to be committed.
- The victim has suffered or is at risk of suffering serious harm, including self-harm.
- There is evidence or suspicion of adult involvement.
- There is evidence that a group of pupils, including pupils from another School, may be involved.
- Any of the children involved are on the Child Protection Register.

The case may also be passed to the organisation currently responsible for the welfare of boarders.

The Anti-Cyber Bullying section of this policy above contains guidance taken from:

Bullying UK: Cyberbullying

"Cyberbullying: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff", November 2014

"Cyberbullying Guidance: Understand, Prevent and Respond" - Childnet International

"Searching, screening and confiscation", DfE, January 2018

"Teaching Online Safety in School", DfE, June 2019

"Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people", DfE, December 2020

Other policies that are related to bullying and should be referred to include:

- Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Child-on-Child Abuse Policy

**Reviewed: September 2023**

**Headmaster**