

Anti-Bullying Policy – Senior School

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

At Nottingham High School, our community is based upon values including respect and empathy. 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 students can develop to their full potential. We expect our students to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed, but orderly, atmosphere. All students should care for and support each other, inside and outside of School.

The School prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting the School in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that there are consistent expectations of behaviour both at school, online and at home, and that the School and parents work closely together.

This policy is available to parents of students and prospective students on our website.

Bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination of students or staff will not be tolerated by the School. We treat all of our students and their parents fairly, and with consideration, and we expect them to respect the staff, the School and each other, in return. All forms of bullying are unacceptable at the School (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying) and any instances of bullying will be recorded and, where appropriate, will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the School's School Behaviour and Discipline Policy.

This policy applies to all Senior School students and applies to actions undertaken both inside and outside of the School context.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

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

Put another way, bullying is the intentional hurting, harming, or humiliating of another person. It may take many forms, including physical (including any threat of or use of violence of any kind), sexual (including the sharing of nudes/semi-nudes), verbal (including cyberbullying via text messages, email, social media, gaming, or other instant messages, and can include the use of images and video), and/or emotional (including by excluding, being sarcastic, name-calling, tormenting, spreading malicious rumours or sharing information about individuals). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone, or actions that fall short of direct participation, where someone encourages others to bully, or joins in with laughing at a victim. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidating, and often involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator(s) and the victim(s) whether that be a physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), or intellectual imbalance, or by the perpetrator(s) having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate the victim(s).

Bullying can sometimes amount to child on child abuse, which is defined as abuse by one or more students against another student. 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 on child on child abuse is reported can be found in the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Bullying is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, and may involve actions or comments regarding a person's race, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, special education needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain health conditions, or because of a child's familial circumstances, such as they are adopted, in care or that they have caring responsibilities. Bullying may be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. For example, bullying can still be homophobic if directed towards a child that is perceived to be gay, whether or not this is the case.

Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time and can involve anyone - students, other young people, staff, and parents.

Where an incident of bullying causes or is likely to cause significant harm to a student, the School will follow the procedures set out in the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

THE SCHOOL'S RESPONSE TO BULLYING

At the School, we always treat bullying very seriously. It conflicts sharply with the School's social and moral principles, and potentially with its policy on equal opportunities for students, and will not be tolerated. When incidents of bullying do occur, they are dealt with quickly and taken seriously. The School will never dismiss or downplay bullying as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”. All reported incidents of bullying will be dealt with by staff in accordance with this policy. Staff will reassure any victim(s) that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

The School understands that bullying can be so serious that it may cause physical, emotional, and psychological damage, such as eating disorders, self-harm and even suicide. Stopping violence and ensuring the immediate physical safety of students is the School's first priority, however, the School acknowledges that emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical bullying, and therefore staff will use their discretion when dealing with an incident of bullying within the parameters of this policy and the Behaviour and Discipline Policy. Whilst bullying itself is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment, sexual violence and assault, sexting, the sharing of nudes/semi-nudes (in certain circumstances), upskirting and to violent and threatening behaviour. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying: everybody has the right to be treated with respect.

The School recognises that children with SEND or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges and may be more prone to peer on peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children. The School also recognises that

certain children may face additional barriers to reporting an incident because of their vulnerability, disability, sex, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation.

Students who are victims of bullying will always be supported and will be reassured that they will be kept safe. Students who have engaged in bullying behaviour will be subject to appropriate disciplinary sanction and will also, where possible, be supported in learning different ways of behaving and offered support for their own circumstances, where appropriate.

Bullying which occurs on school trips, online, or outside of the School's premises or context will not be tolerated any more than bullying on School premises. Teachers will, where appropriate, discipline students for misbehaviour online, outside school premises, outside of the school context and outside school hours.

SIGNS OF BULLYING

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a student 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 School Nurse or Mental Health Lead 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; or
- Talking of suicide or running away from home or school.

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.

BULLYING - PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

The School's response to bullying does not start at the point in which a student has been bullied. We take the following preventative measures in order to create an environment that prevents bullying from becoming a problem at the School in the first place:

Students

- The School promotes an ethos of good behaviour where students treat each other with respect at all times, inside and outside of school;
- All new students are briefed thoroughly on the School's expected standards of behaviour. They are told what to do if they encounter bullying. We guarantee that those who report bullying in good faith will not be punished, will be taken seriously and will be supported and kept safe;
- We use appropriate assemblies to discuss empathy, bullying (including cyberbullying and prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying) and the bystander effect. Our PSHE programme is structured to give students an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the School. The programme is structured to enforce messages about community involvement and taking care of each other. It focuses on the importance of equality and diversity and students are encouraged to avoid prejudicial and exclusionary language;
- Other lessons highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by developing social skills and by teaching moral and spiritual values that show all bullying to be unacceptable;
- All of our students are encouraged to tell any member of staff at once if they are being bullied, or if they know or suspect that bullying is taking place. They are reassured that they will be taken seriously and will be supported and kept safe;
- The School displays advice on where students can seek help, including details of confidential help lines and websites where they can connect with external specialists;
- The School does not tolerate peer-group "initiation ceremonies" or hazing type violence or rituals designed to cause pain, anxiety or humiliation to students, and all staff remain alert to such actions.

Staff

- Upon induction, all new members of staff are given training and guidance on the School's anti-bullying policy and on how to react to, and record allegations of bullying at the School, including cyberbullying. The School will ensure that all School staff understand the principles of the School's policy, the School's legal responsibilities, actions to be taken to resolve and prevent incidents of bullying from arising or escalating and also details of sources of further support.
- The School recognises that certain children may be more at risk of bullying than others and may require additional support when dealing with an incident of bullying, for example children with SEND and/or certain health conditions, and LGBTQ+ students. The School will ensure that staff receive appropriate training to be able to understand the specific needs of our students, and to enable all staff to provide an inclusive environment for all students.
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated as soon as possible. We always monitor reported incidents. Records of any incidents are kept securely online in order that patterns of behaviour can be identified and monitored;

- We have a strong and experienced pastoral team of Tutors, Senior Tutors, Heads of Year and Assistant Heads who support the Deputy Head (Individuals) and are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority, and who are alert to possible signs of bullying and will know when to apply our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy to bullying incidents;
- Our pastoral team gives support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both victims and bullies;
- Our School Counselling service is an important part of our pastoral support service, providing specialist skills of assessment and counselling. Both the Counsellor and Mental Health Lead is available to give confidential advice and counselling support to students who can refer themselves when they have social, emotional, or behavioural concerns. On occasion, a member of our pastoral team may refer a student to the Counsellor as appropriate;
- Staff are always on duty at times when students are not in class and patrol the School site, particularly areas where bullying might occur. They are alert to inappropriate language or behaviour at all times;
- The School has the right, and duty, to investigate incidents of bullying involving our students which take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips, online, or that otherwise occur outside of the school context. The School has the right to take disciplinary measures in respect of such incidents. Disciplinary measures will be taken in accordance with the School's Behaviour and Discipline Policy and will be applied in a fair, consistent, and reasonable manner, taking into account the needs of students with SEND and certain health conditions, and vulnerable students; and
- Staff will always consider the motive behind bullying behaviour and whether it raises any concerns for the welfare of the perpetrator(s). If staff reasonably suspect that a student may be suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, they should follow the procedures set out in the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and discuss their concerns with the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay.

Parents

- This policy is readily available on the School's website so that they are clear on the School's approach to bullying and what to do if their child experiences bullying.
- We encourage close contact between the Tutor and parents/guardians, and will always make contact if we are worried about a student's wellbeing.
- If parents know or suspect that their child, or another student, is being bullied, they should contact the School without delay. All concerns will be taken seriously.
- We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures and all other aspects and implementation of this anti-bullying policy.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH REPORTED BULLYING

The School ensures that all instances of, or concerns about bullying and cyberbullying, both on and away from school premises are easy to report and that they are recorded properly. Records of instances of bullying and allegations of bullying will be kept online by the Deputy Head (Individuals), and also on student files, in order to enable the School to identify patterns of behaviour and to evaluate the effectiveness of this anti-bullying policy. Records will also be kept on files relating to safeguarding where appropriate.

The School recognises that students are likely to report bullying to someone they trust: this could be any member of staff. The School also recognises that children may not find it easy to tell staff about bullying verbally and that instead they may show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice and react to. It is also recognised that an incident may come to a member of staff's attention through a report of a friend, or by overhearing conversations. All staff will be trained in handling an allegation and will be aware that they must listen to the student, not ask leading questions, and make a written record of the allegation to the best of their ability.

The School also recognises that a first disclosure to a trusted adult may only be the first incident reported. It is not necessarily representative of a singular incident. Staff will take all reports seriously regardless of how long it has taken for the child to come forward. Staff will act immediately and will support the victim(s) when they raise a concern.

The aim of all bullying investigations is to reach a situation in which the bullying ceases and all parties move on with their lives positively and with mutual respect.

If an incident of bullying is reported, the following procedure will be adopted:

1. Where a member of staff encounters an act of bullying, whether physical or verbal, he/she must act to prevent an immediate recurrence [for example, by separating the individuals concerned]. Where a member of staff has evidence or grounds for suspicion of an act of bullying he/she must inform the Tutor/HoY of the perceived victim as a matter of urgency – certainly on the same day.
2. A bullying incident should be treated as a safeguarding concern when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. Staff should consider whether the bullying incident is a safeguarding matter and, if necessary, refer to the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy for next steps. It would be an expectation that in the event of disclosures about student-on-student abuse that all children involved, whether perpetrator or victim, are treated as being 'at risk'. Information about the School's anti-bullying and safeguarding policies is provided to staff upon their induction to the School. If appropriate, the School will report bullying incidents to the police or Local Authority.

When the alleged bullying involves just two students

The victim's Tutor or his/her nominee (likely to be a Head of Year or Assistant Head of Year) must:

- Interview the victim, sympathise and encourage him/her to 'open up' about all incidents and to give full details and names offenders
- Tell the victim that action will be taken and that the situation should improve
- Keep a written record
- Carry out any necessary interviews with witnesses/bystanders as part of the investigative procedure
- Speak to the perpetrator's Tutor and pass on all information
- Discuss ways that the victim can help him/herself [avoiding provocative behaviour etc]
- Suggest others [Parents, Pastoral Support or Nurse] who might listen if victim is unforthcoming
- Contact the victim's parents to ensure that they are fully aware of the situation. If the victim is absent from school, ask the parents if they would like his/her friends to get in touch. Organise this via the friends' Tutors
- Speak to the victim's friends – ask them to be vigilant, protective and to report back on any relevant developments
- Provide support. Suggest the victim talks to the School Counsellor or other adult they feel they can trust. If they suggest someone, let that person know
- Offer advice, if appropriate, on strategies for 'self-help', for example, in not provoking a known situation or in moving forward
- Make a diary note to check whether the situation improves over a period of time. If this does not happen give further support and take further action.

The perpetrator's Tutor or his/her nominee (likely to be a Head of Year or Assistant Head of Year) must:

- Speak to the perpetrator on the same day he/she receives any information
- Listen to the perpetrator's point of view [There may be underlying reasons]
- Keep a written record
- Point out very strongly that bullying is not acceptable
- Stress the importance of not retaliating [a useful strategy may be to imply that the information came from a concerned witness, rather than the victim]
- Appeal to the perpetrator to help the situation, for example, by exerting his/her influence to stop another student who might start bullying the victim.
- Consider whether punishment is appropriate in line with the School's Behaviour and Discipline Policy. A minimum response is to issue a ticket and a strong, severe warning about the consequences of a recurrence. Other sanctions may include detention.
- Inform the perpetrator's parents of the situation or discuss with the Deputy Head [Individuals] or Assistant Head [Individuals] whether a meeting with parents is needed. In such a meeting the Deputy Head [Individuals] or Assistant Head [Individuals] will advise parents that suspension from school is a possibility for serious offences and that persistent offenders risk losing their place at the school
- Agree a review date with the victim's Tutor

- The victim's Tutor or person handling any significant incident must write a brief account using the digital Office 365 form. A central record of bullying is kept electronically and in paper form by the Deputy Head [Individuals]. Form teachers and teachers of both victim and perpetrator should be informed [usually by email] with a plea for vigilance and assistance with monitoring

If several students are involved in bullying another/other students

- Acting on information received from a victim's Tutor or other sources the Head of Year will conduct interviews, co-ordinate action by Tutors and speak to the whole Year if necessary. If several students in the same form are involved in a bullying incident the Form Teacher may need to speak to the form when the victim is not present, in order to reiterate points made by Tutors. Staff should consider whether the bullying incident is a safeguarding matter and, if necessary, refer to the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy for next steps.
- If the situation does not improve or is repeated the Deputy Head [Individuals] or Assistant Head [Individuals] will see the bullies, and it is likely that parents will be called into School for a discussion, see above. Significant issues should be raised at the weekly staff briefing.
- Any Head of Year handling any significant incident must write a brief account using the digital Office 365 form. A central record of bullying is kept electronically and in paper form by the Deputy Head. If necessary, Form Teachers and teachers of both victim and perpetrator should be informed [usually by email] with a plea for vigilance and assistance with monitoring. The record of bullying will be entered onto ISAMS.
- A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place and put on record if required;
- In very serious cases, and only after the Headmaster been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police, the DSL or to Children's Services. However, in many cases it will be possible to resolve such issues internally under this policy and the School's Behaviour and Discipline Policy.

CYBERBULLYING

The way in which students relate to one another online can have a significant impact on the culture at school. Negative interactions online can damage the school's culture and can lead to School feeling like an unsafe place. The School makes it clear to students that the same standards of behaviour are expected online as apply offline, and that everyone should be treated with kindness, respect and dignity.

Cyberbullying can be defined as "*the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others*" (Belsey, <http://www.cyberbullying.org/>). It is an aggressive, intentional act often carried out repeatedly over time, and often against a victim who cannot easily defend

themselves. The School acknowledges that cyberbullying often takes place outside the school day and off the School premises.

Cyberbullying could involve communications by various electronic media, including for example:

- Texts, instant messages or calls on mobile phones;
- The use of mobile phone camera images to cause distress, fear, or humiliation;
- Posting threatening, abusive, sexual, discriminatory, offensive, or humiliating material or comments on websites (including blogs, personal websites, and social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly known as Twitter) or YouTube);
- Using e-mail to message others in a threatening or abusive manner; or
- Hijacking/ cloning e-mail accounts.

The School acknowledges that cyberbullying may take many different forms including: cyberstalking, exclusion or peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorised publication of private information or images, encouraging derogative comments on online platforms, sharing nudes/semi-nudes, upskirting, and sexting.

The School has a role to play in teaching students about the underpinning knowledge and behaviours that can help them to navigate the online world safely and confidently regardless of the device, platform, or app. In taking this forward, the School has regard to the DfE's non-statutory guidance on *Teaching online safety in school* (January 2023).

Prevention of cyberbullying

For the prevention of cyberbullying, in addition to the measures described above, the School:

- Expects all students to adhere to its Online Safety Policy. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our IT Department monitors students' use, reporting to the DSL as necessary;
- May impose disciplinary sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse, of the internet [in accordance with the Behaviour and Discipline Policy];
- Issues all students with their own personal School email address.
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying in PSHE lessons, which covers blocking, removing contacts from "friend" or similar lists and sharing their personal data;
- Ensures its students are aware of the various forms in which cyberbullying can take place, that it can have severe and distressing consequences, and that participation in cyberbullying will not be tolerated;
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details private and secure;
- Does not allow the use of mobile phones in classrooms, public areas of the School, or where they may cause annoyance, humiliation, or distress to others; and

- Does not allow the use of cameras/ mobile phone cameras in toilets, washing and changing areas [or in the bedrooms of boarding houses].

Procedures for dealing with cyberbullying

The School will follow the procedures set out in this policy and in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy where relevant for incidents of cyberbullying, taking such disciplinary action that is considered reasonable in the circumstances, with a view to regulating student conduct and protecting the reputation of the School, and the welfare of its students.

Although cyberbullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws that may apply to communications of a harassing or threatening manner or the unauthorised publication of private images, upskirting, sharing nudes/semi-nudes, and sexting. Where the School considers that a reported incident of cyberbullying may amount to a criminal offence, it will inform the Police.

Electronic devices

In response to an allegation of cyberbullying, certain staff are permitted to conduct a search for electronic devices, such as a student's mobile phone, with the authority of the Headmaster. Staff do not require the consent of the student, or their parents to undertake a search, provided they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the student is in possession of a prohibited item, or an item that has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence, or to cause personal injury to any person (including the student being searched), or cause damage to property, and provided they have the Headmaster's prior consent to undertake a search.

The member of staff leading the investigation will determine the need to contact parents for consent or not. If the student refuses the consent, they will be asked to explain why, and this may be taken into account for discipline and actions on conclusion of the investigation. The School may then contact the police if they feel this is needed. If the parent refuses consent then the School may draw inferences from their decision and again the Police may be informed.

When a search is carried out, it will be done so in such a manner so that minimal embarrassment or distress is caused. If a student is physically searched, the searcher and the second member of staff will be of the same gender as the student. When property is searched, a member of the Senior Management Team will direct the search and be accompanied by another member of staff.

Where a search finds an electronic device that the member of staff undertaking the search reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence or cause personal injury or damage to property, the School may examine any data or files on the device, where there is good reason to do so, for example, where there has been an allegation of cyberbullying. Parental consent to search through electronic devices is not required but they will be informed after the event unless doing so presents a further risk to any child.

The School may also erase any data or files from the device if the School considers there to be good reason to do so, unless there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the device may contain evidence in relation to a criminal offence, where the files should not be deleted and the device must be given to the Police without delay.

If, following a search, the member of staff determines that the device does not contain any evidence in relation to bullying and/or a criminal offence, or are advised by the Police following a report to them that they will not take any further action to investigate an alleged offence, the School can decide whether it is appropriate to delete any files or data from the device, and may retain the device as evidence of a breach of this policy and the Behaviour and Discipline Policy. The School may then take steps to punish the student in accordance with the Behaviour Management Policy and/or Misbehaviour and Exclusions Policy, where appropriate. In the event that the search highlights a safeguarding concern in respect of any student, the School will follow the procedures set out in the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

School staff can confiscate, retain or dispose of a student's property as a disciplinary penalty. The law protects staff from liability in any proceedings brought against them for any loss or damage to items they have confiscated, provided they acted lawfully. Staff will always consider whether confiscation is proportionate and consider any relevant special circumstances.

The School will keep a record of all searches carried out, including the results of any search, and the actions taken following that search.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Parents and students are encouraged to use our Complaints Procedure (which is published on our website) if they feel that any concerns about bullying (or anything else) are not being addressed properly.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The School will record all incidents of reported bullying in accordance with this policy.

The Deputy Head (Individuals) will review all incidents of reported bullying to help identify patterns of behaviour, so that the School can take appropriate steps to address bullying behaviours within the School. Records of bullying incidents will also be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the School's anti-bullying procedures, and to highlight any necessary amendments.

This policy is reviewed and updated at least annually, by the Senior Management Team and Governors.