

# POLICY FOR THE SCHOOL'S APPROACH TO BULLYING

## INTRODUCTION

**Chantry High School seeks to be an effective, caring school. We will take all instances of bullying seriously.**

Any behaviour which deprives an individual of this right can be described as bullying. The school seeks therefore to foster an atmosphere of openness, honesty and care for the individual, together with an awareness of self and others.

We recognise that everyone who is part of the school community has **the right to feel safe and comfortable**, happy and at ease, both at school and in the surrounding community. (See Fundamental Rights in School Behaviour Policy).

Chantry High School has underlined its commitment to tackling bullying by signing the Charter for Action. Bullying can engender feelings of insecurity, fear, defencelessness; helplessness and can seriously undermine a pupil's self esteem.

## DEFINITION

At Chantry High School we define bullying as the wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten, frighten someone, or make someone feel uncomfortable, by a pupil or pupils who have some power over their victim. This power may arise from greater physical strength or greater numbers of pupils. This behaviour may be repeated over a period of time.

Bullying can take many forms but we recognise three main types:

**Physical** – hitting, kicking, taking belongings, pushing, shoving, taking property, destroying property, damaging work, etc.

**Verbal** – name-calling, insulting, making racist remarks (under legal guidelines these are to be reported on the school proformas and reported to the LA), sending hurtful text messages, sending malicious emails.

**Indirect** – spreading stories about someone, excluding someone from social groups, group bullying.

The school also recognises that pupils may be the subject of **Sexual Harassment** or **Homophobic Bullying**.

## PREVENTION

The school seeks to be proactive in preventing bullying and to develop a culture where pupils recognise that it is unacceptable.

- Pupil surveys are used to highlight concerns.

- In lower school the issue is dealt with discretely in PSHE/Citizenship.
- The issue is revised periodically in assemblies.
- In parts of the curriculum the issue is also discussed and there are discrete units that deal with it, eg English, Drama.
- Tutors have a responsibility for recognising relationship problems in their groups and for being sensitive to the interactions of pupils that might give rise to bullying.

## RESPONSES

### Members of Staff

The publication 'Don't suffer in silence' (DfES) and the subsequent six regional conferences 'Tackling Bullying: Make the Difference' stressed the following:

- Pupils have the right to come to school and feel safe from violence, threats and acts of unkindness.
- Bullies need to be made aware that their behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- The targets of bullying need to be helped, to have their self-esteem raised. They need to be given strategies to help them avoid bullying.

**1. All members of staff will take all incidents of reported bullying seriously. A key element is that pupils' concerns are listened to and taken seriously.** This is essential if an atmosphere of trust and mutual support is to be fostered. Pupils should feel reassured that they have done the right thing in talking about their concerns. Once a pupil has disclosed that they are being bullied, everything should be done to ensure that they feel safe. Staff should make judgements about giving the pupil sanctuary or ensuring that they are in a safe place. Subject teachers, form tutors, Year Managers and Heads of School need to be informed as soon as possible. Pupils need to know that all reported cases will be followed up. They need to feel reassured that they have done the right thing in 'telling'.

2. In an open atmosphere pupils should be able to:

- a) tell a teacher
- b) tell their parents
- c) tell a friend who can tell
- d) tell a brother, sister or relative
- e) tell a CHUM (Peer Support Worker)

3. Each bullying incident should be logged on a bullying report form. These are available in the Staff Room.

Staff should write clearly the details of what has happened. The member of staff should then pass the form to one of the team trained in the appropriate methods for tackling bullying or tackle the problem themselves if they feel confident to.

## **METHODS**

### **Parents**

1. Bullying is often an emotive issue for parents. They need to feel reassured that the school can and will act.
2. Once a case of bullying is reported the tutor and Head of Year/Head of Subject should phone the parent to let them know that it will be dealt with. Judgements need to be made here as to whether it is a friendship squabble.
3. If a parent comes into school they should be reassured that the matter will be taken seriously. Under no circumstances should a parent be allowed to speak to the bully. Often parents over react and escalate the problem outside school.
4. The school has a sheet 'Guidelines for parents whose children are being bullied'. Parents should be offered one of these and also a set of guidelines for the pupil for "what to do if you are being bullied" adapted from Childline and Kidscape which are methods for tackling the bullying issues.
5. It is important that parents should be kept informed of the outcomes.
6. It is vital that parents raise the self esteem of pupils who are the victims of bullying(s).

### **Bullying that takes place off school premises**

Although the school is not directly responsible for bullying that takes place outside school grounds and hours, the school has an obligation to deal with it particularly when instances overlap into school. In extreme cases, however, parents should enlist the help of the community police.

1. The school endeavours to use four recognised methods of resolving bullying. They are:
  - i) Normal Head to Head Conflict Resolution with a member of staff present
  - ii) The No-Blame approach – B. Minns
  - iii) Shared concern - Pikas
  - iv) CHUMS – Peer Mentoring. Pupils may request to see a CHUM.

Methods i) and ii) centre on the bully / bullies understanding the effects of their actions and the feelings caused by them. Ground rules need to be established that will enable the pupils to co-exist within the same school. These methods have four essential ingredients

- the absence of blame
- the encouragement of empathy
- shared responsibility

- problem solving
2. Whichever method is employed, it is important that there is a continued follow up to ensure that there is no reoccurrence of the problem
  3. A central log of all incidents will be kept by the Deputy Head Pastoral. The Deputy Head will also ensure that there is appropriate Inset.
  4. Where it is felt appropriate, or if a problem persists, parents will be informed and involved.
  5. The school recognises that there may be a need for assertiveness training for bullied pupils. It also recognises that bullies may need help. Punishment will only be used where it is felt to be appropriate such as in the use of violence. Pupils may be excluded for violence; judgements will be made according to circumstances.
  6. The framework of the bullying policy will be published in the School Prospectus. All parents should be made aware of its existence and should be reassured that the school takes bullying seriously.
  7. The school has a clear preventative policy on bullying. In Years 7, 8 and 9 it is an integral part of the Personal and Social Education Programme. The aim of respect for individual rights is underlined in the whole school curriculum and by the whole school ethos.
  8. In instances where pupils suffer from racial or sexual harassment, the people concerned will be spoken to and judgements made as befits the situation.
  9. Two school leaflets are available from the Deputy Head, Pastoral, Guidance and Advice to Parents on Bullying and Advice to Pupils Suffering From Bullying. We also recommend linking with Pupiline ([www.pupline.co.uk](http://www.pupline.co.uk)). Pupils can also visit [www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk) [www.antibullying.net](http://www.antibullying.net) [www.antibullyingalliance.co.uk](http://www.antibullyingalliance.co.uk)

## **WARNING SIGNS**

Any of the following may be indicators that a child is the victim of bullying. The list is not exhaustive, and perhaps one of the best signs is **Change:** in behaviour, routines, progress at school or in social groupings.

### **Attendance:**

- Frequent small illnesses without obvious external symptoms, eg headaches, stomach aches, feeling dizzy, feeling sick but not being sick.
- Excuses for not going to school / excuses to delay departure
- Afraid of walking to school
- Persistent requests to be driven to school
- Avoidance of / 'missing' the school bus.

- Truancy or lateness to or from school
  - Changing route to/from school
  - Hanging around after school
  - Trying to stay indoors /excessively 'helpful'
- b. **Academic:**
- Underachievement
  - Withdrawal from oral activities
  - Avoidance of certain lessons, e.g. sick.
  - Work, equipment lost or destroyed.
  - Spend hours doing 'extra' homework; for example homework for the bully.
- c. **Social:**
- Withdrawal from school/class activities
  - Alone
  - Abusive language
  - Temper flare-ups
  - Hitting out at others
  - Personality change
  - Touch taboo / flinching
  - Becomes uncommunicative
  - Hanging around adults – weak excuses
  - Loss of confidence
- d. **Physical:**
- Cuts, bruises
  - Torn clothes, damaged property
  - Stammering
  - Refusal to eat
  - Obsessive cleanliness
  - Nightmares, bedwetting, sleepwalking, fear of dark
  - Nailbiting
  - Self harming
- e. **Other**
- Losing pocket money
  - Regularly asking for extra money
  - Unlikely explanations for behaviour changes
  - Running away
  - Threatening / Attempting suicide