



# KING'S HOUSE SCHOOL

RICHMOND



Member of staff responsible:	Head and Head of Pastoral Care
Date of policy review:	January 2025
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## **INTRODUCTION**

King's House School expects all members of the School community to treat other people with courtesy and respect. Everyone has the right to be safe and secure, whether at school or elsewhere, and to be protected when vulnerable, so that all may flourish without fear of unfair treatment or harassment.

The School's approach to bullying is clear: it is always unacceptable. The effects on the victim can cause psychological damage which can continue long after the actual bullying has stopped. Any incident is therefore taken seriously and investigated swiftly.

Ensure the policy states that, if a bullying incident is being treated as a child protection concern, then any investigation of the incident by the School is authorised by local children's services.

**This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies: Safeguarding Children, Behaviour, Discipline and Exclusions, and Internet Safety.**

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

Bullying damages children and the School will do all it can to prevent it by developing an ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable.

The School aims to provide a safe, secure and mutually respectful environment where all can learn without anxiety and where measures are in place to reduce the likelihood of bullying.

All those connected with the School are made aware of the School's zero tolerance approach to bullying and staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities in this regard.

## **WHAT IS BULLYING?**

Bullying can be defined as words or actions that are intended to be insulting, intimidating or hurtful to another pupil or group of pupils and which happen on a regular basis.

Bullying can be physical or emotional. It may take many forms and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, culture, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs and disability, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be continued unkindness in relation to a pupil's home circumstances, health or appearance. It might be indirect, for example, malicious gossip, exclusion from activities, or damaging someone's property or it might occur through cyber-technology (social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs, sexting and email).

Any behaviour which makes another feel uncomfortable or threatened may be construed as bullying, whether intended or not. All complaints must be taken seriously and pursued. Acting



against bullying is a part of every adult's duty of care to pupils, on and off site, and of pupils and colleagues to each other.

Any peer-on-peer abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or part of 'growing up'.

#### Examples of bullying behaviour

- Physical bullying may include: fighting, damaging or hiding someone else's belongings or clothes, setting up someone else to get the blame for a breach of School rules, initiation ceremonies.
- Emotional or psychological bullying may include: excluding someone from a group, activity or place, spreading rumours, being deliberately unfriendly, unpleasant messages or telephone calls or unpleasant material placed on websites.
- Verbal bullying may include: aggressive name calling, teasing, mockery, insults, use of homophobic, racist, sexist, and other types of discriminatory language.
- Sexual harassment includes: making inappropriate comments about appearance and attractiveness, uninvited propositions, uninvited touching and using innuendo or inappropriate imagery.
- Cyberbullying is the use of electronic communication to bully a person and includes: threats and intimidation, harassment or 'cyberstalking', vilification/defamation, exclusion or peer rejection, impersonation and unauthorised publication of private information or images.

If a pupil feels like they are being bullied then they should report this immediately to a relevant member of staff, whether that be their Form Teacher, Head of Pastoral Care or any adult within school that they trust, who then may pass this information on to the necessary staff member. Pupils are encouraged to speak up and the importance of this is emphasised through reminders during well-being assemblies and PSHE sessions during form time.

### **THE SCHOOL'S PHILOSOPHY REGARDING BULLYING**

The Governing Body supports the Head in all attempts to eliminate bullying from the School. Any incidents of bullying will be taken very seriously and dealt with appropriately. Throughout the School the course of action will, as far as possible, be immediate and appropriate to the age and maturity of the child.

All members of the School community including staff, pupils, parents and governors, have a responsibility to show that they believe that any form of bullying is unacceptable and to set an example which reflects that view.

The School expects staff, pupils, parents and governors to:

- Treat other people with respect and sensitivity including (but not limited to) members of the School and the wider community, members of other schools, visitors and exchange students.



- Think carefully before speaking/acting (whether face-to-face or via any form of media) in ways which may cause upset.
- Respect and celebrate differences and variety.
- Understand that what may seem fun to some, may seem much more threatening to others.
- Show kindness and consideration to those who appear unhappy or vulnerable.
- Make a stand against those who ignore or go against these aims.

Incidents of bullying that do occur are recorded and monitored to enable patterns to be identified. The School's anti-bullying strategies and their effectiveness are reviewed regularly.

## **THE ROLE OF THE HEAD**

The Head ensures that all pupils are taught that bullying is wrong and that it is unacceptable behaviour in the School.

The Head ensures that the School provides effective and regular staff training in anti-bullying. The School knows policies are most effective when all school staff understand their principles and purpose, know their legal responsibilities, how to prevent and resolve problems, and where to seek support.

## **THE ROLE OF THE TEACHERS AND SUPPORT STAFF**

All staff are constantly on the lookout for signs of bullying and seek to prevent it from taking place. Teaching staff are required to support all pupils in their class and to establish a climate of trust and respect for all. When pupils feel they are important and belong to a friendly and welcoming school which praises, rewards and celebrates success, bullying is far less likely to be part of their behaviour.

Pupils are taught that if they are being bullied or are aware of another pupil being bullied, that they should tell someone. They may speak to any member of staff they feel comfortable talking to. Staff are aware that any discussion of such a nature should be reported swiftly to a member of SMT or the pastoral team.

Any suspected bullying issues are raised and discussed in staff meetings. Some incidents may be minor but may develop into a pattern of persistent behaviour. Action is taken to reduce the risk of bullying at times and in places where it is most likely to occur, such as on the playground, during break and lunch time, in the changing rooms and on the school playing fields.

Regular anti-bullying training is provided to all staff, including as part of induction.



## **THE ROLE OF PARENTS**

A parent who is concerned that a pupil (their own child or another) may be being bullied or is being a bully, should contact the relevant Head or Head of Pastoral Care. 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.

Parents have a responsibility to support the School's anti-bullying policy and to actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the School. The School also expects all parents to reinforce the value of good behaviour at home.

## **MEASURES TAKEN TO PREVENT BULLYING**

The School takes the following measures to prevent bullying:

- All pupils are given clear advice about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders, through assemblies, stories, PSHEE, and form time.
- The School consistently implements disciplinary sanctions where it can clearly be proven that there is bullying behaviour. The sanctions reflect the seriousness of the incident to reinforce that bullying is unacceptable. In line with the School's Behaviour Policy, sanctions will not be shared with anyone other than the perpetrator's parents.
- In form groups and lessons, we discuss the differences between people that could motivate bullying. Pupils are taught that the use of any prejudice based language is unacceptable.
- The School draws on the expertise of anti-bullying organisations which provide resources for dealing effectively with certain forms of bullying, such as Childline, Kidscape etc.
- The School invests in specialised skills training to help staff understand the needs of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disability and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) pupils.
- The School operates a peer-mentoring system whereby Year 8 pupils are paired with small groups of Year 4 pupils to help them feel more comfortable and secure with the transition to the Senior Department.
- All pupils from Year 1 upwards are required to sign a 'Responsible ICT Use' form each year which provides guidance for responsible and appropriate use of the School's ICT resources. Staff monitor all pupil usage at school to ensure that this happens.
- The School's e-Safety programme is also designed to build resilience in pupils so that they can protect themselves and their peers. Pupils are encouraged to speak out if they come across something which they are unhappy about or which worries them.
- Age-appropriate lessons are given in both Computing and PSHE about the dangers of cyber-technology and its potential for abuse. Pupils are taught that it is a criminal offence to send an electronic communication to another person (words and/or images) with the specific intent to cause distress or anxiety, that these actions can have severe and distressing consequences, and that participating in such activity will not be tolerated.



- The School provides support and guidance to parents by inviting them to attend talks by external specialists on internet safety and cyberbullying.

## **WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF BULLYING?**

It is not always easy or even possible to tell whether someone is being bullied. Young people who feel under emotional pressure may find it hard to talk.

- There may be changes in behaviour, such as shyness and nervousness or aggressiveness and demands for attention.
- There may be feigned or real illness or a lack of appetite.
- Work and sleep patterns may change, or there may be lack of concentration or withdrawal.
- They may be nervous & jumpy when a cyber-message is received.
- A pupil who is being bullied or feels vulnerable may be unwilling to attend school.

## **ANTI-BULLYING PROCEDURES -**

If a bullying incident comes to the attention of any member of staff it will be reported immediately to a member of SMT or the pastoral team, regardless of whether it takes place at the School or outside of the School.

The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying will be investigated and an appropriate strategy will be agreed for dealing with the case. The aim is to ensure that the bullying is stopped as quickly as possible. Emphasis is placed on understanding the root of the problem.

Depending on its seriousness, the case may appropriately be handled by any one of a number of people but in every case an email is sent to all relevant staff informing them of the incident and a record placed on the file of the pupils concerned.

Parents of both the bully and the victim will normally be contacted and the issues discussed with them. In serious cases, the Governors are to be informed.

For all incidents of bullying, whether isolated or occurring over a period of time, disciplinary sanctions will normally be applied in accordance with the Behaviour, Discipline and Exclusions Policy and this may extend to a temporary exclusion, a requirement to leave or, in the gravest cases of severe or persistent bullying, a permanent exclusion.

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 all cases, parents will be informed and consulted.

After an incident has been investigated and dealt with, it will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.



## **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN**

A bullying incident will be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'.

A referral will be made to children's social care services in accordance with the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures where pupils have been identified as 'in need' of support, whether as perpetrator or victim of bullying behaviour.

If staff become aware of a sexting incident it will be reported to the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, the school may, nonetheless, need to draw on a range of external services to support a pupil who is experiencing bullying or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988 it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or convey a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender. If school staff feel that an offence may have been committed, they will seek assistance from the police.

## **EYFS CHILDREN**

All children, even the very young, are encouraged to behave towards each other with kindness, consideration and respect. They learn to respect that we may hold different views and to value diversity. They learn to look after their own possessions and to respect those of others.

The School explains to children why some forms of behaviour are unacceptable and hurtful to others. The School rarely needs to impose sanctions.

Parents are informed in person or via a note in the homework diary when any sanction or reproof is needed and, in cases of repeated instances of hurtful or inappropriate behaviour, they will be invited into the School to discuss the situation and to agree a joint way of handling the difficulty.