



## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

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We have a strong anti-bullying culture at Shrewsbury House School. Nevertheless, in any situation where people interact, bullying, or what can be construed to be bullying, can occur. To assist us in doing our utmost to avoid the occurrence of either at Shrewsbury House, we rely on the vigilance of staff, the good sense of boys and the support of parents. Although there must be a distinction between what can happen intentionally and what can happen unintentionally, neither is acceptable at Shrewsbury House. Any alleged or perceived bullying is investigated as a matter of priority and dealt with appropriately. Proven bullying is regarded as a very serious matter. The distress that can be caused to victims through the act or acts of bullying can be very significant and any proven instances of bullying will be dealt with due regard to the importance of fully implementing the school's anti-bullying policy and the seriousness with which the school takes this matter.

### **We recognise :**

that we owe a duty of care to all of the boys who attend Shrewsbury House both as part of our responsibility for child protection and to enable boys to gain full benefit from their education. A boy cannot learn if he is scared or preoccupied with what will happen to him out of class (be it at school or at home);

that "bullies" and "victims" are not always easily distinguishable and we must be careful not merely to identify easy scapegoats - which would itself be a kind of "institutionalised bullying". A child may appear in either category over time or the bully may also be a victim of others, including his parents. There is a likelihood that bullies may have special educational needs, learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including emotional, psychological and behavioural problems or significant problems at home;

that, whilst punishment clearly has a place in dealing with significant incidents - and in such cases we will have to use sanctions as appropriate - the more important response is to aim at rebuilding relationships and helping boys to get along, at the least, adequately;

that fear, pain and humiliation of the victim give pleasure to the bully. Other boys can be involved in, or witness, the activities and remain silent. This can be because they are frightened of becoming a victim of the bullying themselves;

that a victim does not always tell anybody, not even his parents. If they are told, parents can find the situation difficult to deal with, either out of embarrassment or because they see it as part of the growing up process, or in the case of the bully, will not accept that their son is a bully;

and that certain boys can actually "provoke" other boys into bullying them.

### **The aims must be :**

That we stimulate an "anti-bullying culture" between pupils, between staff and pupils, and, equally important, between staff themselves; that any incidence of bullying is reported immediately and dealt with with immediacy; that no boy is allowed to become distressed because he is a willing or unwilling victim.

It is essential that school and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together. Acceptance of this anti-bullying policy forms part of our standard Terms and Conditions, which are issued to parents as part of the admissions procedure.

### **A definition of bullying**

Bullying may be defined as the intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another person by physical (including sexual), verbal (including chat room and SMS messages), and emotional means (by excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidatory.

Bullying may involve actions or comments that are racist, religious, cultural, sexual/sexist, homophobic, which focus on disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape). Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time. We always treat it very seriously. It conflicts sharply with the school's policy on equal opportunities, as well as with its social and moral principles.

### **Cyber-bullying**

Cyber-bullying can be defined as: 'the deliberate use of Information Communications Technology (ICT) - particularly mobile phones and the internet, including photographs, email and social networking sites like Bebo, Myspace and Facebook - to upset someone else.' In other words, using any technology to threaten, to be offensive, or to be unpleasant. Opportunity for a boy to do this in school time is very limited, due to restrictions and observation systems in place (including mobile phones not being allowed in school). However, if it were to happen, it would be treated as seriously as any other form of bullying. Furthermore, if it occurs outside school, it will be treated as a school matter.

### **SIGNS OF BULLYING (whether occurring at School, or home)**

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 bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoiled by others
- Books, bags 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 Matron
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- Choosing the company of adults

- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping, experiencing nightmares
- Talking of suicide or running away

It must be emphasised that these are guidelines to possible symptoms, although there may be other causes for some of them, a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers.

We would differentiate between what is intentional and unintentional. Bullying is deliberate and persistent violence, physical or psychological, conducted by an individual or a group and directed against an individual or group who is/are not able to defend himself/themselves in the actual situation. Other unintentional behaviour can hurt a victim, either physically or psychologically. This is not acceptable and requires guidance, but we would not include it in our definition of bullying which we would emphasise is something that is intentional. For instance, a one-off act of random violence against a boy who happens to be in the wrong place at the wrong time is not bullying (though clearly unacceptable).

Bullies choose a victim for a reason: because he is vulnerable or because of some characteristic(s) he has. This means that bullying can take many forms according to the dynamics of the interaction: physical attack; verbal abuse; threats; damaging, hiding or stealing of property; psychological abuse (e.g. spreading rumours, isolation); racially motivated bullying; targeting of perceived weakness (e.g. disability); individual bullying; group bullying; “imported bullying” (e.g. where families are in dispute).

### **Anti bullying culture**

It is important that we have an ongoing anti-bullying culture within the school. Staff aim to achieve this by both formal and informal discussion with the boys.

The subject can be raised in RE and English lessons; in assemblies; and in Tutor group discussions. (Videos that we have seen have not been thought of value).

Staff (tutors, in particular, but this is a responsibility of all staff) aim to get boys to understand the following:

*Remember that your silence is the bully's greatest weapon!*

#### ***If you are being bullied:***

- a) Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be, and that it is WRONG!
- b) Be proud of who you are. It is good to be individual.
- c) Try not to show that you are upset. It is difficult to do this but a bully thrives on someone's fear.
- d) For the interim you might choose to stay with a group of friends/people. There is safety in numbers.
- e) Walk confidently away. Go straight to a teacher or member of staff.
- f) Fighting back may make things worse. Talk to a teacher before you do so.

- g) Generally it is best to tell a teacher straight away. You will get immediate support. Teachers will take you seriously and will deal with bullies in a way which will end the bullying and will not make things worse for you.

**If you know someone is being bullied:**

- a) TAKE ACTION! Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feel more unhappy and on his own. It is also rather cowardly of you.
- b) If you feel you cannot get involved, tell an adult IMMEDIATELY. Teachers have ways of dealing with the bully without getting you into trouble.
- c) Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully.

**Staff are very careful that they do not contribute to a bullying problem either by having a bullying approach to boys themselves or by seeming to take sides with someone who is bullying.**

**PREVENTATIVE MEASURES**

We take the following preventative measures:

- Staff awareness of areas and times of risk. Bullying is likely to take place at times when an adult is not immediately present or close enough. Staff are particularly aware that potentially the most likely occasions and places at Shrewsbury House are: between lessons; when there is queuing; the lavatories; on minibuses and the dining hall and sports hall, both of which give opportunity to exclude a boy.
- We use Assemblies to raise the issue of bullying and its supreme undesirability. Our PSHE programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the school. The programme is structured to enforce the message about community involvement and taking care of each other.
- Other lessons or activities, particularly RS, English and Drama highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable and by developing social skills.
- All our pupils are encouraged to tell a member of staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place.
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once by an appropriate member of staff. Even if the incident is not dealt with personally by the Director of Pastoral Care, he is made aware of all proven incidents of bullying. He retains a record of these to enable the school to be aware of any emerging patterns to develop pro-active strategies for avoiding bullying. We always monitor reported incidents.

- We have a strong and experienced pastoral team of Tutors and Heads of Year who support the Director and Deputy Director of Pastoral Care and Discipline and are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority, and are alert to possible signs of bullying.
- 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.
- Staff are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class and patrol the school site, particularly areas where bullying might occur. They are trained to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour. We raise staff awareness of any proven bullying incidents and the lessons learned through our weekly full teaching staff meetings.
- Our Library/Sick Bay displays advice on where pupils can seek help, including details of confidential help lines and web sites connecting to external specialists, such as Childline.
- We reserve the right to investigate incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips and that occur in the vicinity of the school, involving our pupil
- Staff training in implementing the school's anti-bullying policy is undertaken through the weekly full teaching staff meetings, participation in assemblies, house meetings and tutor groups, one to one counselling, support and feedback meetings are undertaken by our Director of Pastoral Care and the Deputy Director of Pastoral Care, with individual staff members seeking guidance or advice. In the annual INSET prior to the beginning of each academic year, the Headmaster undertakes anti-bullying training with all teaching staff members.

We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures

### **Dealing with incidents**

However good we are at instilling an anti bullying culture there will be incidents which require action. When an alleged incident is drawn to a member of staff's attention, he/she must ensure that it is reported immediately to an appropriate member of ISMT. (An email is not sufficient. Contact the member of ISMT directly).

The member of staff will listen. He/she will take an account from the victim. If it is not bullying he/she will advise. If it does seem to be bullying the member of staff will investigate by talking to the alleged bully and onlookers.

The problem will be explained to those involved individually so that the distress of the victim is understood.

The Headmaster and Tutor should be informed.

The alleged bully and/or group will not be blamed but will be made to understand that they are responsible for putting things right and are asked to suggest ways in which this can be done by them. He/they will be offered guidance on modifying his/their behaviour. He/they will be talked through any sanctions that will be applied.

The victim is told that the matter has been dealt with and there should be no re-occurrence. He must report to the relevant member of staff if the bullying continues. It will be made clear to him that revenge is inappropriate. He will be offered support to develop a strategy to help himself.

A few days later (no longer than a week) all involved should be seen to ascertain how things are progressing.

All of this must be recorded and reported to the Headmaster who will inform the rest of the staff. If the matter is of particular urgency an immediate staff meeting will be convened.

Parents of the victim and/or alleged bully will be involved if it is deemed necessary to help solve a problem or to provide more information. Otherwise, parents of the victim and bully will be informed immediately of what is alleged and they will be kept informed of what has happened with the investigation and what action has been taken (although no parent of another boy may be told what a punishment of a boy who is not their son is and staff must be careful not to mention to a parent names of other boys involved or who are witnesses without first gaining their parents' permission).

It is hoped that there will not be the need to consider suspension or permanent exclusion but if an incident is sufficiently serious then either of these courses may be implemented.