

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

STATEMENT OF INTENT

At Longridge Towers School, our community is based upon respect, good manners and fair play. 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 pupils can develop his/her full potential. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed; but orderly, atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other.

Longridge Towers School prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Ours is a diverse community, with pupils from a variety of cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds. Some pupils require additional support and help. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting Longridge Towers School in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together. Acceptance of this policy forms part of our standard terms and conditions.

Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the school. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable. Where necessary, we will apply the sanctions described in our Behaviour Policy for behaviour that constitutes bullying or harassment of any kind.

Further information can be obtained from the DfE guidance document 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying'.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying may be defined as the intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another person. It can take the form of racial, religious, cultural, sexual, sexist, homophobic, or disability related bullying. It could involve physical (including sexual) intimidation, verbal, cyber (including chat room, email, e-photos 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 intimidating.

Bullying may involve actions or comments that are racist, homophobic, which focus on disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape). Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time. It can cause serious and lasting psychological damage and even suicide. Harassment and threatening behaviour are criminal offences. 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.

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 bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt 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)
- Psychological damage and diminished levels of self confidence
- Frequent visits to the Medical Centre with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches
- 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, experiences nightmares
- Talking of running away or suicide

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

We take the following preventative measures:

- We use appropriate Assemblies to explain the school policy on bullying. 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. It specifically tells pupils whom they should inform if they are being bullied, or are worried that another pupil is being bullied.
- Other lessons will occasionally 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 the teaching or pastoral staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place, either face-to-face or by using Tootoot (in Senior School). Every member of staff is trained on how to respond to such allegations as part of their induction training.
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents.
- We have a strong and experienced pastoral team under a dedicated Senior Teacher Pastoral consisting of Form Tutors, Head of Junior Department, Matron, Heads of Year, and, in the case of Boarders, House Parents who support the Head and are aware of 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 allocated on a rota basis supervision duty at times when pupils are not in class and patrol the school site, particularly areas where bullying might occur. They are aware of being alert to inappropriate language or behaviour. In addition, staff are expected even when not officially duty to respond to incidents of bullying.
- Our Surgery and the Boarding House displays advice on where pupils can seek help, including details of confidential help lines and web sites connecting to external specialists, such as Childline, Kidscape, Get Connected and Samaritans.
- All pupils have access to a telephone helpline, enabling them to call for support in private.
- Initiation ceremonies are banned, as they are often based on carrying out actions which are deliberately devised to cause a pupil embarrassment and humiliation.

- We reserve the right to investigate incidents involving our pupils that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips or that occur in the vicinity of the school.
- We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures.

BOARDING

In the Boarding House, there are strong teams of House Parents who act *in loco parentis*. The informal house environment is important in reinforcing a pupil's standards and values, providing the opportunity for friendly, informal discussion of matters of concern to the individual pupil outside the formal classroom. We encourage close contact between the House Parents and parents/guardians, and would always make contact if we were worried about a pupil's well-being. This policy is provided not only to parents of boarders but is available and known to staff and boarders, including junior and recently appointed staff. There are no 'initiation ceremonies' intended to cause pain, anxiety or humiliation. Any pupils who are being bullied are suitably supported, and pupils who may bully others are also given suitable help and guidance. Senior pupils in the Boarding House are all given guidance on the Anti-Bullying policy and how to deal with any suspected incidents.

CYBER-BULLYING – DEFINITION

Cyber-bullying involves 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.

Cyber-bullying can involve Social Networking Sites, such as Bebo, Myspace and Ask.fm, emails and mobile phones used for SMS messages and as cameras.

CYBER-BULLYING – PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

In addition to the preventative measures described above, Longridge Towers School:

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its charter for the safe use of the internet. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our ICT Department monitors pupils' use.
- May impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet.
- Adheres to the advice given by CEOP regarding E-teaching and the internet and uses resources available from CEOP.
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyber-bullying in PSHE lessons, which covers blocking and removing contacts from "buddy lists".
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe.
- Mobile phones are not permitted to be used in classrooms without the permission of the teacher, or where they may cause annoyance to others.
- The use of cameras on mobile phones or any other recording equipment is not allowed without permission of a member of staff.

Further details, including Longridge Towers School's charter on the use of the internet, are given in our Acceptable Use Policy for ICT, Mobile Phones and other electronic devices.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH REPORTED BULLYING

If an incident of bullying is reported, the following procedures are adopted:

- The member of staff to whom it was reported or who first discovers the situation, will control the situation, reassure and support the pupils involved.
- He/she will inform an appropriate member of the pastoral team as soon as possible.
- The member of staff will calmly explain the range of disciplinary measures that are potentially involved.
- The victim will be interviewed on his/her own and asked to write an account of events.
- The bully, together with all others who were involved, will be interviewed individually and asked to write an immediate account of events.
- The incident should be recorded.
- All tutors, Heads of Year, the Senior Teacher Pastoral (who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead), the Head of the Junior Department and House Parents (if appropriate) should be informed. In very serious incidents, the Headmaster should also be informed.
- The victim will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the alleged perpetrator. It will be made clear to him/her why revenge is inappropriate. He/she will be offered support to develop a strategy to help him or herself.
- The alleged bully will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the victim, and it will be made clear why his/her behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. He/she will be offered guidance on modifying his or her behaviour, together with any appropriate disciplinary sanctions.
- The parents/guardians of all parties should be informed and invited into school to discuss the matter. Their support should be sought.
- A way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and counselling, should be agreed. This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for children who are being bullied and for pupils who bully others, as well as dealing with appropriate disciplinary measures.
- A meeting involving all the parties, with close staff supervision, could be helpful in developing a strategy for all concerned to close the episode.
- A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place.
- In very serious and persistent cases, and only after the Headmaster has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to the Social Services. However, it is the policy of Longridge Towers School to attempt to resolve such issues internally under the school's own disciplinary procedures, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely.

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