

# Anti-Bullying Policy

This Policy applies to the whole school and is published to staff, pupils and parents

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## Introductory Note

Longridge Towers School is a 3 – 19 years school. Whilst understanding that in legal terms, in Scotland a young person is deemed an adult at 16 and in England an adult at 18, the following policy aides the School in the managing of appropriate behaviour and its duties in safeguarding all members of the School community. Therefore, for the purpose of clarity, the term pupil in this context encompasses those who are registered to attend classes regardless of age and legal status as an adult. We expect all pupils to abide by our school rules and policies, irrespective of their age.

## **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 their full potential. We expect our pupils and staff to treat each other with courtesy and co-operation so that pupils can learn in a relaxed, orderly atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other, inside and outside of school.

Longridge Towers School prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Ours is a diverse community, with pupils from a variety of 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 there are consistent expectations of behaviour both at school, online and at home, and that the School and parents co-operate closely together. Acceptance of this policy forms part of our standard terms and conditions.

Bullying, cyberbullying 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. All forms of bullying are unacceptable at the School (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying) Where necessary, we will apply the sanctions described in our Behaviour Policy for behaviour that constitutes bullying or harassment of any kind. This policy applies to all pupils in the School and applies to actions undertaken both inside, and outside of the School.

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

## **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 or spreading malicious rumours). 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 pupils against another pupil. 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 Child Protection / Safeguarding 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 - pupils, other young people, staff, and parents. 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 School Matron 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 and reported/ recorded, as appropriate, in accordance with this policy.

### **Preventative Measures**

We take the following preventative measures:

- We use appropriate assemblies to explain the school policy on bullying. Our PSHEE 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. They are reassured that they will be taken seriously and will be supported and kept safe.
- 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 and safeguarding team under the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Head of Pastoral Care. This consists of Form Tutors, Head of Junior Department, Matron, Heads of Forms, and, in the case of Boarders, House Parents who support the Headmaster 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 on 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 are provided with details of 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.

## **Cyberbullying – Definition**

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". 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 may take place inside School, outside of School and at any time of the day.

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, Twitter or YouTube);
- Using e-mail to message others in a threatening or abusive manner; or
- Hijacking/ cloning e-mail or social media 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.

## **Cyberbullying – 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 Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command (CEOP) regarding E-teaching and the internet and uses resources available from CEOP.
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying 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.
- The use of mobile phones in school is not permitted except for Sixth Form pupils. The conditions for acceptable use are detailed in the Mobile Phones and Portable Communication Devices Acceptable Use Policy (Pupils).

## **Procedures for Dealing with Cyberbullying**

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

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, up skirting 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 pupil's mobile phone, with the authority of the Head. Staff do not require the consent of the pupil, or their parents to undertake a search, provided they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil 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 pupil being searched), or cause damage to property, and provided they have the Head's prior consent to undertake a search.

Where a search finds an electronic device that is prohibited by the School rules, or where the member of staff undertaking the search reasonably suspects that the electronic device 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. If indecent images are suspected, these should only be viewed as per Child Protection Policy.

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 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. The School may then take steps to punish the student in accordance with the Behaviour Management Policy/Discipline and Sanctions Policy, where appropriate. In the event that the search highlights a safeguarding concern in respect of any pupil, the School will follow the procedures set out in the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The School will keep a record of all searches carried out, including the results of any search, and the actions taken following that search. This should be by means of recording on a Serious Incident Form.

Further details are also to be found in the school's IT Acceptable Use 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 on file, and also on pupil files. Records will also be kept on files relating to safeguarding where appropriate, in order to enable the School to identify patterns of behaviour and to evaluate the effectiveness of this anti-bullying policy.

The School recognises that pupils 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 pupil, 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.

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.
- They will inform an appropriate member of the pastoral team as soon as possible.
- Where an issue of pupil behaviour or bullying gives 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm', staff should follow the procedures set out in the School's (Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy) rather than the procedure set out below.
- The member of staff will calmly explain the range of disciplinary measures that are potentially involved.
- The victim will be interviewed on their 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 Forms, the Head of Pastoral Care, the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the Head of the Junior Department and House Parents (if appropriate) should be informed. In serious incidents, the Deputy Head/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 them why revenge is inappropriate. They will be offered support to develop a strategy to help themselves.
- 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 their behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. They will be offered guidance on modifying their 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 lines with our safeguarding procedures.
- 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 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.

## **EYFS Children**

Even the School's youngest children are encouraged to behave towards each other with kindness and consideration. They are encouraged to learn to look after their own possessions and to respect others' possessions. We expect them to be honest, helpful, and polite, and to work hard and to listen to others. They should respect everyone and learn to value differences and diversity. Sandra Bullen, the Head of EYFS, is in charge of the management of behaviour in the EYFS setting.

We explain to our EYFS children why some forms of behaviour are unacceptable and hurtful to others. We rarely need to impose sanctions in the EYFS setting; but sometimes we may remove a privilege for hurtful behaviour. Occasionally, a child may be spoken to by the Head of EYFS, who will explain the inappropriateness of a particular action and introduce a more appropriate action; but such instances are rare. Parents are always informed when any sanction or reproof is needed towards their child, and in cases of repeated instances of hurtful or inappropriate behaviour, parents will be invited into the School to discuss the situation with the child's teacher and the Head of EYFS, to agree a joint way of handling the difficulty.