



Anti-Bullying Policy

A Statement on Bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs, a disability, a protected characteristic or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; teachers and schools have to make their own judgements about each specific case.

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways. It may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Bullying can take place at School or on the way to and from School. Young people may also be bullied in and around their homes. Wherever it takes place, bullying is a serious matter that affects everyone.

Sometimes the bully is so insensitive to the effect he is having on others that he will not be fully aware of the impact of his actions. As a result, behaviour of the type described, which leads to people being hurt, physically or emotionally, can properly be described as bullying, even if the bully is not conscious of the effect of his behaviour. Bullying hurts and can cause serious psychological damage, even suicide. Early signs of distress may include deterioration of work, spurious illness, isolation, the desire to remain with adults, erratic attendance. Whilst this behaviour may be symptomatic of other problems, it may be the early signs of bullying and should be recorded and brought to the attention of housemasters and tutors so that any patterns in behaviour can be identified.

A Policy for Stopping Bullying

We aim to develop a School ethos that encourages civilised behaviour, recognises everyone's individual strengths and deems bullying of any type to be unacceptable. We have adopted, as appropriate, the guidance given in "[Preventing and Tackling Bullying – Advice for School Leaders, staff and Governing Bodies](#)" (July 2017) , [Supporting children and Young people who are bullied](#) (Oct 2014) [Cyberbullying: advice for headteachers and school staff](#) (Nov 2014), [Advice for parents and carers on cyber bullying](#) (Nov 2014) and [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges](#) (Dec 2017).

In line with the School's behavioural policy, staff are required to arrive on time for lessons and to be alert to the signs of rough or boisterous behaviour, on the sports fields, in the lunch and tuck shop queues and houserooms. Bullying can also manifest itself in the form of cyberbullying (please see Appendix 1 and ICT Policy for advice on cyber bullying.) Every incident should be followed up. We hope that all members of the Abingdon community will be encouraging and supportive of each other rather than abusive and undermining. Being aware that pupils often find themselves in very crowded situations, the development of patience, consideration and diplomacy is crucial. Relationships must be based on respect, trust and caring for others, rather than on power and strength. Boys new to the school are not subjected to any form of 'initiation ceremony' intended to cause pain, anxiety or humiliation.

The School will not allow bullying to prevent each individual from making the most of his talents. One of the School's key objectives is to stress the importance of good inter-personal relationships; this is highlighted in full School, house and section assemblies, and plays a prominent part in the tutorial and PSHCE programmes. Pupils are expected to abide by the Acceptable Use of the School Network Policy and ICT Policy, which details clearly the consequences for misuse and to which they have all signed up before being permitted to use the school network. As part of the School community, pupils, including those victimised, have a responsibility to discourage bullying and to report incidents of it, including incidents of bullying outside school. Our experience is that bullying does stop when it has been reported and dealt with and that the victims of the bullying do not suffer as a result of the telling. Bullying can only exist and thrive in an atmosphere of secrecy where individuals are not open enough to talk about their feelings.

The issue of bullying is reviewed regularly at all levels of the school and whole staff training takes place when necessary usually at the start of the academic year or during weekly staff meetings. Regular action is taken to identify those areas where bullying is most likely to take place and measures are taken to eradicate it. Staff are encouraged to provide a climate where differences should not only be accepted but should be embraced: all pupils are encouraged to foster good relations, and the School advances equality of opportunity, irrespective of the presence of a protected characteristic or not. In order to raise staff awareness, where appropriate Abingdon will invest in specialised skills to understand the needs of their pupils, including those with SEN or disabilities, protected characteristics, or LGBTQ pupils.

Crucial to fostering good relations between pupils is pupils seeing respectful and empathetic behaviour modelled by others. Staff are expected to treat pupils respectfully and appropriately, as are older pupils. This is more formally embedded via tutor periods, PSHCE and peer mentoring by older pupils, and by successes being celebrated.

Procedures for Dealing with Bullying, whether in school or outside school

1. Boys being victimised and those who see others being bullied, are encouraged to speak up about bullying, ideally before it becomes harmful. They are encouraged to speak with anyone in authority with whom they feel confident, such as a tutor, Housemaster, Deputy Head Pastoral, or the Chaplain or Head. Prefects, at all levels of the School, as well as academic staff, housekeepers and health centre staff, are advised on how to react to requests for help in dealing with bullying. Anyone can also use the Whistleblowing facility. If you find yourself a bystander who observes bullying it is important to report it, and this applies equally to parents as to pupils. Incidents that are reported can be dealt with, and early intervention is often crucial in preventing a situation from escalating.

2. Complaints about bullying will be followed up with vigour and sensitivity. Under some circumstances, it may not be appropriate to identify the victim to the bully but those involved will usually be interviewed and, with the victim's consent, will be brought together to help the bully appreciate the impact of his behaviour. Tutors and housemasters will work closely together to implement a plan of action designed to support the victim and reform the behaviour of the bully. In most cases the Tutor or Housemaster will inform and seek advice from the Deputy Head (Pastoral) when they have a concern about bullying behaviour, and this will always happen if the behaviour is considered serious on any level. Attempts will be made to defuse tensions between boys and to repair relations so that the bullying does not develop. At this stage, disciplinary measures would be the exception rather than the rule.
3. If the victim continues to feel bullied, he must continue to seek help. Written statements from both the victim and the bully may be asked for and sanctions are likely to be imposed. In these circumstances, the Deputy Head (Pastoral) will decide the appropriate level of sanctions, in consultation with the housemaster, and when appropriate the Head, and will see the boys concerned.
4. Parents are kept informed as necessary throughout the victim support process.

Sanctions

These are in accordance with those that can be found in the Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy.

1. The school may wish to apply a number of sanctions and may require the bully to write a letter of apology to the victim. A record would be kept. If a boy has been involved in cyberbullying this may result in temporary confiscation of certain equipment, for example a mobile phone.
2. If a bully fails to heed the warning and advice given, more serious sanctions will be considered. In the case of cyberbullying a boy may have his access to the school network rescinded or limited
3. If matters are still unacceptable and unresolved, the Deputy Head (Pastoral) will interview both bully and victim. A formal warning may be issued which would be kept on file.
4. In exceptional cases of bullying, where the bully fails to see the consequences of his actions, the Head will issue a final warning or even use the ultimate sanctions of temporary or permanent exclusion. It may also be the case that the Police will be contacted.

There may be occasions when a child's (or children's) behaviour warrants a response under child protection rather than anti-bullying procedures. All such instances must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and will be dealt with in accordance with the school's procedures for abuse. (Please see the Safeguarding Policy.) Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, the DSL will refer the abuse to external agencies, including, as necessary, the police, and the MASH in accordance with the procedures in the Safeguarding Policy.

Conclusion

At Abingdon, we do not accept that bullying is an inevitable part of school life. Our aim is to ensure that pupils do not identify bullying as a serious problem in the school. No one should have to suffer bullying. It is up to all of us to take action when bullying happens, to us or to others.

Deputy Head (Pastoral)

Last internal review: May 2018

Last governor review: May 2018

Next governor review: May 2019

Appendix 1

Cyber bullying

The DfE has issued very helpful guidance on cyber bullying. They contained hyperlinks so the best advice would be to look at these online in order to access the resources available. The links to these documents are:

[Cyber bullying: advice for Headteachers and school staff](#)

[Advice for parents and carers on cyber bullying](#)

The advice contained within these guidance is embedded in the school policy above, but of particular note to staff, parents and pupils would be the following sections:

- the safety and reporting tools for various social networking sites (p5 of the Advice for headteachers and staff)
- the contact details for mobile phone providers (p6 of the Advice for headteachers and staff)
- the Advice for Children (p3 of the Advice for parents and carers) reprinted below
- the information and links on social networking (p1 and 2 of the Advice for parents and carers)
- the information and links on social networking (p2 of the Advice for parents and carers)

Advice for children

The following are some things that parents may wish to consider teaching their children about using the internet safely:

- Make sure you use the privacy settings.
- Always respect others – be careful what you say online.
- Be careful what pictures or videos you upload. Once a picture is shared online it cannot be taken back.
- Only add people you know and trust to friends/followers lists online. When talking to strangers keep your personal information safe and location hidden.
- Treat your password like your toothbrush – keep it to yourself and change it regularly.
- Block the bully – learn how to block or report someone who is behaving badly.
- Do not retaliate or reply to offending e-mails, text messages or online conversations.
- Save the evidence. Always keep a copy of offending e-mails, text messages or a screen grab of online conversations and pass to a parent, a carer or a teacher.
- Make sure you tell an adult you trust, for example, a parent, a carer, a teacher, on the anti-bullying co-ordinator or call a helpline like Childline on 08001111 in confidence.
- Most social media services and other sites have a button you can click on to
- report bullying. Doing this can prevent a bully from targeting you and others in the future. Many services take bullying seriously and will either warn the individual or eliminate his or her account.
- While you are on your mobile phone make sure you also pay attention to your surroundings.