



Peponi School

## Anti-Bullying Policy

### Definition of Bullying

Bullying is a conscious abuse of power. It is a deliberate desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone. Bullying covers a wide range of activity. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidating.

### Types of Bullying

#### Physical aggression

This includes pushing, shoving, kicking and punching – it may also take the form of severe physical assault.  
Verbal

Here the voice is used as a weapon. It may be in the form of persistent name calling directed at the same individual which humiliates, hurts or insults. This bullying is often directed at the victim because of physical appearance, accent or distinct voice characteristics and academic ability of both low and high achievers. Name calling may also take the form of suggestive remarks about a pupil's sexual orientation or comments about a pupil's racial origins or religion. Persistent teasing and malicious gossip may be included under this heading.

#### Intimidation

This is based on the use of very aggressive body language and tone of voice where the victim may be pressurised to do something that s/he does not want to. The bully's facial expression or 'look' can convey aggression and/or dislike. Threats are consistently used to undermine the victim's confidence.

#### Exclusion

This practice is usually initiated by the bully. The victim is purposely isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. It may be compounded by circulating notes, whispering insults which can be overheard by the victim or writing derogatory remarks on whiteboards, desks or in public places.

#### Extortion

Money and other possessions may be demanded and the victim threatened if he/she does not comply promptly. The victim may be coerced into stealing property for the bully. Such tactics may be employed solely to incriminate the victim.

#### Damage to property

The bully may focus attention on the victim's property. As a result clothing, school books or other personal property may be damaged, stolen, or hidden.

## **Cyber bullying**

Cyber bullying can be defined as the use of Information and Communications Technology (I.C.T.), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone. Cyber bullying can include a wide range of unacceptable behaviours, including harassment, threats and insults, and like face-to-face bullying, cyber bullying is designed to cause distress and harm. Cyber bullying can be an extension of face-to-face bullying, with technology providing the bully with another route to harass his/her target, others may support cyber-bullying by passing on or showing to others, images or text designed to humiliate.

## **Teacher Behaviour**

Unwittingly or otherwise, a teacher may engage in, instigate or reinforce bullying behaviour by:

- humiliating a pupil who is academically weak or vulnerable;
- using sarcasm/negative comments with regards to a pupil's physical appearance or background;
- Using gestures or expressions which are intimidating and threatening.

## **Effects of Bullying**

Although victims often remain silent, changes of mood and behaviour can be indicative of their suffering. Victims of bullying feel helpless and overwhelmed by the power that the bully exercises. This leads to insecurity, increased fear, loss of confidence and consequent lowering of self-esteem. Thus, the victim becomes more vulnerable. Vigilance with regards to any behavioural changes is important as early intervention is crucial.

## **Identifying Bullying**

A pupil who is being bullied may display some of the following signs and symptoms:

- anxiety about travelling to and from school;
- a pattern of physical illness e.g. headaches;
- changes in temperament and/or behaviour;
- signs of anxiety or distress – difficulty in sleeping, not eating, crying etc.;
- possessions and/or clothing damaged or missing;
- unexplained bruising or cuts;
- deterioration in educational performance or loss of enthusiasm and interest in school;
- reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.

Individually, these signs and symptoms do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied. However, if there is a combination or repetitive occurrence of these, then further investigation is needed in order to determine what is affecting the pupil.

## **Reasons for Bullying**

The reasons for bullying behaviour are complex and varied. Some common reasons are:

- aggressive behaviour is acceptable;
- to gain status in front of peers;
- to gain attention from significant adults;
- boredom;
- extortion;
- to compensate for failure;

- bullying behaviour can be symptomatic of a victim of child abuse/neglect.

### **Dealing with Bullying**

Bullying behaviour is not acceptable in Peponi School. Pupils must recognise that it is their duty to report incidents and to accept responsibility for the welfare of other pupils. Pupils who fail to report bullying may find themselves subject to sanctions. Whilst bullying may be reported to any member of the school community, as a general guideline, incidents of bullying should be reported in the first instance to the House Master, Form Tutor or any other member of staff. All incidents should be recorded and reported to the Head of Pastoral Care. The Head of Pastoral Care will investigate any incident that raises concerns and take necessary action.

### **Anti-Bullying Strategies**

Peponi School is a caring community where individual and collective responsibilities are paramount. In this context bullying will not be tolerated. We aim to prevent bullying in any form and to have a consistent approach so that incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively. We will ensure that all members of the school community are aware of this policy and strategies.

It is everyone's responsibility to prevent bullying from happening in the school. Aims

- To foster an atmosphere of tolerance and mutual respect within the school community.
- To provide a safe and caring environment in which each pupil is afforded the opportunity to maximise his/her potential in all facets of school life.
- To create on the part of staff and pupils an awareness of bullying and an understanding of its causes and consequences.
- To promote a moral climate in which bullying is socially unacceptable and in which both victim and witness/witnesses are at liberty to report any incident either directly, or via a third party.

### **Prevention & Awareness**

- Bullying is a whole school issue and as such the subject arises in a variety of curriculum areas.
- Bullying is formally addressed in PSHE classes where the nature of bullying is explored and an attempt made to develop self-protective strategies and appropriate responses.
- The school's pastoral system under the guidance of the Second Master, the Housemasters/Mistresses, School Counsellor, Form Tutors and the Head of Years, Nurses, Prefects and SLT provides support.
- At all appropriate opportunities the message that bullying is unacceptable is reinforced and pupils are encouraged to foster positive attitudes and conduct. Tutorial meetings, School assemblies, and House meetings all play an important role in prevention and raising awareness.
- In their dealings with pupils, staff must aim to build good rapport and trust, and seek to create an open atmosphere in order to facilitate communication.
- Teachers and other staff are constantly trained in internal and external in-sets
- Co-curricular activities such as the President's Award and outdoor activities that foster teambuilding are used to promote cooperation, build rapport and enhance pupil self-esteem.
- Formal and informal communication between members of the Common Room, staff and parents has a vital role to play in prevention and should be positively promoted. Pupils are encouraged to talk without delay to prefects, staff and parents regarding any incidents involving bullying.
- Remember that your silence is the bully's greatest weapon.

### **Dealing with Incidents of Bullying**

- The victim of bullying is reassured that the matter will be taken seriously and he/she is given guidance in order to help him/her cope.
- Appropriate counselling and sanctions are applied to the bully and his/her behaviour is monitored.

- All incidents of bullying are recorded.
- Serious incidents of bullying are reported to parents/guardians.

### **Procedure – If you are being bullied.**

As a general guideline pupils or parents with any concerns or complaints regarding bullying, or any of the above, should, in the first instance, contact the House Master, Form Tutor or any other member of staff.

### **Dealing with the Victim**

In all situations, the victim's welfare must be of paramount importance.

- Reassure the victim that the matter will be taken seriously and will be dealt with.
- Meet with the victim as soon as possible. Make a written record of what has happened.
- Meet with witnesses whenever possible.
- Support the victim in planning self-protective strategies and a response, if the incident should recur.
- Agree with the victim the action to be taken e.g. interview the bully etc.
- Arrange a review date in an agreed short period.
- Report the action taken to the parents of the victim, and to all other interested parties within school.
- Refer to the Headmaster for further action if deemed necessary.

### **Dealing with the Bully**

- Meet with the bully as soon as possible. Make a written record of what has happened.
- Stress that it is the behaviour and not the person that is unacceptable.
- Suggest acceptable forms of behaviour and highlight any good form that the pupil has already demonstrated.
- Responsibility for any harm/hurt/damage must be accepted by the bully and, where appropriate, recompense made.
- Decide on action and sanctions to be taken. Inform the bully that his/her behaviour will be closely monitored.

### **Bullying - Action to be Taken**

- Report the incident(s) to parents/guardians.
- Set a review date to allow for positive changes to be acknowledged.

Refer if necessary to more senior members of staff and ultimately the Second Master and the Headmaster.

### **Recording Procedures**

- All instances of bullying are to be recorded either by the House Master, Form Tutor, Head of Year or the Second Master who is the head of pastoral care.
- A written account of incidents of bullying should be placed in the files of all those pupils involved.
- Form Tutors, Head of Years, Boarding Staff and Senior Leadership Team are to be informed. In some cases all staff will be informed where this is deemed necessary.
- Parents/guardians of pupils involved are informed by the House Master/Mistress, Second Master or The Headmaster.

## Sanctions

- The nature of teenage life is such that tensions do occur within friendship groups and in these circumstances a decision may be reached to manage the situation without recourse to formal sanctions.
- Depending on the seriousness of the offence, a range of sanctions such as detention, gating and suspension may be employed. These sanctions may be applied not just to the bully but also to pupils who are aware that bullying is taking place and who fail to disclose it.
- Where a pupil's persistent bullying defies the school's attempts to satisfactorily address it by behavioural management strategies or disciplinary methods, within a reasonable time, the Headmaster may decide to expel the pupil concerned.