ABERCORN SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

This policy also applies to the EYFS

Updated	Review Date	Version
April 2022	January 2023	2022.01

Signed: Mr John Clarke (Chair of Board)

STATEMENT OF INTENT

This policy has been put together with regard to the DfE guidelines "Preventing and Tackling Bullying" July 2017, "Behaviour and Discipline in Schools" February 2014 and "Cyberbullying Advice for headteachers and school staff" 2014. This policy also addresses the legislation given by the Equality Act 2010 safeguarding arrangements as detailed in the "Children Act" 1989 and criminal law.[1]

This policy should be read in conjuncture with other relevant school policies, including:

- *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures*
- *Online Safety Policy*
- *PSHE Policy*
- *Supervision Policy*
- *Discipline, Behaviour Rewards and Sanctions Policy*
- *Student Acceptable Use Policy*

Bullying is wrong, damages individuals and is not tolerated at Abercorn. Our aim is to nurture an ethos of good behaviour where the pupils treat one another and the school staff with respect because they know that this is the right way to behave. We have a clearly-stated policy that bullying in any form is unacceptable behaviour. It is emotionally and psychologically damaging, it disrupts the community atmosphere of the School and prevents individual pupils from achieving the very highest standards in whatever activity they are undertaking.

The School endeavours to create an environment that prevents bullying from being a serious problem in the first place. Any reported incident is taken seriously and investigated. All parties are given the chance to speak their minds freely. All parties are brought together in the presence of a teacher, the appropriate member of the Pastoral Team, and/or a member of the SLT or Head to discuss the problem if appropriate. Emphasis is placed on understanding the root of the problem. Instigators must be left in no doubt of the School's policy.

This policy and the processes outlined within it will be regularly evaluated and reviewed. Although Anti-Bullying is covered on numerous occasions throughout the year, both in PSHE and other lessons and Form time (with information on display in Form rooms), at the beginning of each academic year, all Forms (regardless of age) will have a session on bullying with their Form Teacher at a level appropriate for their age. The leaflet in Appendix 1 is given to all pupils from Year 3 upwards and also displayed. Younger pupils have age specific sessions with their teachers who make sure that the pupils know what to do.

All staff adhere to our Code of Conduct (see Employment manual) and understand that all forms of corporal punishment are not permissible at Abercorn School, but are also unlawful. Guidance is given on the use of physical restraint and where this might be reasonable to use as a proportionate response.

1. WHAT IS COUNTED AS BULLYING?

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms and may occur directly or through cyber-technology (social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and emails). It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, culture, gender, gender homophobia, special educational needs and disability, or because a child is adopted or has caring

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[1] Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK it is important to note that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour, or communications, could be a criminal offence under the "Protection from Harassment Act" 1997, the "Malicious Communications Act" 1998, the "Communication Act" 2003 and the "Public Order Act" 1986. The school should seek Police assistance if it is felt that offence may have been committed.

responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is our first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical.

Examples (bullying can often cross across these definitions):

Physical
- Hitting
- Kicking
- Pulling hair
- Punching
- Tripping up
- Damaging belongings

Sexual
- Any sexual acts or violence
- Sexual harassment
- Up skirting

Verbal – Direct
- Name-calling
- Mocking someone's appearance or speech
- Racial or sexual harassment
- Hurtful teasing or "banter" are also not acceptable

Verbal – Indirect
- Spreading nasty stories
- Passing nasty notes
- Social exclusion
- Disability discrimination

Gestural
- Showing hostility
- Making signs with hands, bodies and postures
- Ignoring others
- Using negative, unpleasant facial expression
- Rejecting

Passive
- Being a bystander
- Not telling an adult when bullying has been witnessed

Online
Using communications technology, such as telephone, text, email, photographs, chat rooms, instant messaging, social websites such as Facebook, to intentionally cause hurt or embarrassment to the recipient, which can entail any form of bullying. Pupils at Abercorn are not allowed to have mobile phones on their person whilst on the School premises.

All pupils at Abercorn are required to agree to the Student Acceptable User Policy relating to computers, which they sign, along with their parents. The School uses SENSO monitoring to flag any inappropriate use of School IT equipment, including bullying. Any pupil found to have used Information Technology to write and / or distribute offensive material about another pupil will be considered to have broken the Student Acceptable User Policy and will be subject to the sanctions outlined in the policy and may be subject to the sanctions outlined in the Anti-Bullying Policy if this is deemed necessary after investigation.

Staff should also refer to our extra guidance on sexual imagery and the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, to be found as an appendix in our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

2. DEALING WITH BULLYING

All members of staff are responsible for the enforcement of school rules and the implementation of the anti-bullying policy with regard to the pupils. In person training takes place for all staff and forms part of the staff induction procedure. The agreed process should be followed as set down in the agreed policy. All members of staff should set a proper example of respect, kindness, courtesy and good manners, not just towards the children but in all their relationships at school. Appropriate training and guidance will be provided in fostering such behaviour. This training will also include appropriate action to take to reduce the risk of bullying and to identify situations in which it is likely to occur.

There is a possibility that bullying becomes a safeguarding issue in the case of child-on-child abuse and should therefore be treated as such. "Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)" (KCISE September 2022). If bullying does become a Safeguarding issue, the School will follow its Safeguarding Policies and Procedures and staff will contact a member of the Safeguarding Team.

The School has a well-defined process to follow. This is approved by the Board and communicated to Parents and Staff

3. WHERE DOES BULLYING TAKE PLACE?

Bullying can take place anywhere in school between pupils; between pupils and staff; or between staff; by individuals or groups; face to face, indirectly or using a range of cyber-bullying methods.

The Head, SLT, Bursar and Board regularly consider the site and make alterations e.g. vision panels in doors, to minimise areas where bullying incidents can take place undetected.

Bullying can also take place outside school premises and if this is reported to the School it will be investigated and appropriate action taken. This sends a strong signal to pupils, parents and staff alike that bullying will not be tolerated and instigators will be held to account.

4. ALERTS AND SIGNS OF BULLYING

Most staff develop a good understanding when it comes to the well-being of their pupils and can spot problems easily. We recognise that pupils with SEND or certain health conditions can face additional challenges and may be more prone to bullying. In addition, the School utilises filtering and monitoring systems, such as SENSO, to monitor pupil behaviour when online. However, as a general guide, the victim of bullying may display all, some or none of the following:

- *the recipient, or another pupil, confides in a member of staff;*
- *a parent raises concerns about behaviour with a member of staff;*
- *changes their usual routine;*
- *becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence;*
- *starts stammering;*
- *attempts or threatens suicide or runs away;*
- *cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares;*
- *feels ill in the morning;*
- *unexpected academic underachievement;*
- *unwonted reticence;*
- *tearfulness;*
- *non-specific 'illness' presented to a member of staff;*

- *social isolation;*
- *tiredness;*
- *moodiness;*
- *aggression;*
- *a desire not to come to school;*
- *comes home with clothes or books damaged;*
- *has possessions which are damaged or 'go missing';*
- *asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully);*
- *has unexplained cuts or bruises;*
- *is bullying other children or siblings;*
- *stops eating;*
- *is frightened to say what's wrong;*
- *gives improbable excuses for any of the above;*
- *is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone;*
- *is nervous or anxious when an online message is received.*

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

5. SANCTIONS

Disciplinary sanctions are intended to impress on the instigator that what they have done is unacceptable and is intended to act as a deterrent and clear signal to others. Bullying by a member of staff will be dealt with by the staff disciplinary procedures, which are contained within the Staff Handbook.

A pupil who has been acting in a bullying way will be given the opportunity to apologise and, where possible, make restitution. Pastoral support will be readily available for the instigator, including ongoing learning and guidance about the causes and consequences of their behaviour.

If the behaviour continues, or is repeated, the pupil will attend a disciplinary meeting with the Head.

Sanctions include:

- *Awarding a sanction;*
- *A temporary restriction on movement/playtimes;*
- *A weekly report card, along with specific targets, to be filled in daily by specific members of staff and discussed with Form teacher or member of the SLT;*
- *Reflection time;*
- *Temporary or permanent exclusion.*

A more full account of Rewards and Sanctions can be found in the Staff Handbook and the Discipline, Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy.

6. SUPPORTING THE VICTIM/S

The interviewer must ensure that the victim feels confident that they know who to approach should further incidents arise. Suitable support and monitoring should be in place for as long as the staff involved deem appropriate.

Sexual harassment and violence

The School treats sexual harassment and violence seriously. Pupils and their parents should be confident that the School will support those who report such matters and be sensitive to the serious nature of such reports. As with other forms of bullying, the same process will be followed in terms of investigation, support and sanctions.

There is also a dedicated NSPCC helpline for children who have been subject to sexual abuse in schools. This number is 0800136663.

7. COMBATING BULLYING IN THE LONGER TERM

Anti-bullying strategies

The school is pro-active in implementing intervention and preventative systems.

Strategies include:

- *actively provide systematic opportunities to develop pupils' social and emotional skills, including their resilience;*
- *building resilience in all pupils to support them in coping with bullying, but also so they have the knowledge and confidence to report bullying behaviour. This is done in assemblies, PSHE lessons and across lessons, break time and other activities;*
- *consider all opportunities for addressing bullying including through the curriculum, through displays, through peer support and through whole school activities;*
- *train all staff, teaching assistants and non-teaching staff to identify bullying and follow School policy and procedures on bullying;*
- *discuss, monitor and review our Anti-Bullying Policy on a regular basis to ensure the School has a clear picture on bullying;*
- *ensure there is a common understanding of the definition of bullying, how to identify bullying and how to react to bullying issues;*
- *actively create opportunities for vulnerable children and young people to take time to recover;*
- *prevention, de-escalation and stopping any continuation of harmful behaviour;*
- *reaction to alleged and proven incidents of bullying in a prompt, reasonable, proportionate and consistent way;*
- *safeguarding the person who has experienced bullying and to trigger sources of support;*
- *the application of disciplinary sanctions to the person causing the bullying and to ensure that they learn from the experience;*
- *an ethos that makes it clear that bullying will not be tolerated;*
- *structured support through Form Teachers, PSHE lessons and the House system;*
- *a School Council to raise issues worrying the pupils;*
- *planned times throughout the year to address bullying, such as Anti-Bullying Week, as well as daily contact with a supportive adult, such as a Form Teacher;*
- *extra-curricular activities over lunch break;*
- *open and communicative relationships with parents;*
- *celebration of diversity;*
- *encouraging support for the less fortunate;*
- *providing training for older pupils to recognise the signs of bullying and how to report it;*
- *encouraging the understanding and implementation of Abercorn Learning, particularly collaboration and reflection.*

Abercorn will work to prevent bullying in the long term by:

- *Pro-actively training and supporting staff in dealing with incidents;*
- *Regularly updating and informing staff of current initiatives;*
- *Regularly updating and informing staff of any ongoing bullying situations in school;*
- *Raising awareness of problems and discussing with pupils alternative positive behaviour;*
- *Raising awareness and increasing participation in Abercorn Learning, particularly any activities involving collaboration and reflection;*
- *Promoting strategies to protect and support the victims and making children aware of where they might find help. For example: www.childline.org.uk, www.kidsmart.org.uk, www.bullying.co.uk;*

- *Providing support for the bully and helping to change their behaviour;*
- *Dealing effectively with incidents using the defined process.*

This Policy and the Procedures set down within it will be discussed regularly in staff meetings at all levels. This Policy will be shared with parents.