

# Fort Pitt Grammar School



## *Anti-Bullying Policy*

*Agreed by the Local Governing Body: November 2017  
Next Review Date: November 2018*

## Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy and practices which arise from it, aim to ensure a safe and secure environment in which every member of the school community feels valued and respected and is able to focus fully on their work, free from intimidation. Every member of the Fort Pitt community should feel safe and happy so that she/he is able to learn and achieve her/his potential.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is the repetitive, wilful, conscious desire to hurt another person and to put them under stress. Bullying causes a member of the school community to feel unhappy, insecure, threatened or excluded.

Occasionally, students “fall out” and **may** resort to some of the behaviours associated with bullying. When ‘relational conflict’ occurs, both parties are involved but are keen to resolve the problems quickly and amicably.

At Fort Pitt Grammar School, the following persistent behaviours are considered to be forms of bullying:

- deliberately ignoring others and excluding them from groups or activities
- making others feel uncomfortable
- passing notes or spreading malicious rumours
- exchanging "looks"; making others feel uncomfortable
- teasing or making improper comments about a person’s race, sexuality, religion, dress, religion, looks, family circumstances, looked after children, fostered, etc
- threatening, including verbal threats by telephone, e-mail, text message or social networking site
- Inappropriate use of social media
- hitting and using physical violence such as pushing
- demanding money
- damage to others’ property

When and where does bullying take place?

Bullying can take place:	
	in the classroom In the corridor in the locker room at the school gates on the way to and from school at break time at lunch time outside school hours on social media

## Effects of Bullying Behaviour

- when a student is bullied her life is made miserable, not only in school, but outside and at home also
- she may be unhappy or even scared about coming to school
- her unhappiness may often affect her concentration and learning
- over time she is likely to lose confidence and self-esteem which can continue into adult life
- her general health may be affected
- in severe cases, bullying may lead to long periods of depression, self-harm and possible suicide

We aim to develop a culture in which bullying is not tolerated and is challenged. Bullying can only thrive in a climate of silence. Our policy will encourage “speaking out” by those who are bullied (“Don’t suffer in silence”), those who witness bullying and those who hear about incidents of bullying.

We aim to tackle incidents of bullying sensitively, systematically, consistently and efficiently. This will be achieved by:

- publicising our anti-bullying policy within and outside the school and recognising the need to have the co-operation of parents and families in stamping out bullying
- having a coherent and consistent framework for addressing bullying issues
- having a commitment to anti-bullying education

To support the policy, at the suggestion of the students, the school has introduced the role of Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator. It is **not** the job of the Anti-bullying Co-ordinator to deal with incidents of bullying, but to be responsible for:

- maintaining a database of bullying incidents
- ensuring that the policy is adhered to
- monitoring the policy's effectiveness.

## The Policy Framework

The framework is based around four aspects:

- Revealing / Reporting Incidents
- Collecting Evidence and Recording of Incidents
- Actions
- Monitoring and Evaluation

## **Revealing / Reporting Incidents**

To encourage people to SPEAK OUT with confidence and to make the reporting of incidents as easy as possible, we aim to provide as many initial contacts as possible for students to report incidents with confidence within the school. It has to be the student's choice as to whom they reveal the problem. The following list is for reference only; the order is of no significance:

- ✓ Head of House
- ✓ Form Tutor
- ✓ Subject Teacher
- ✓ SLT
- ✓ Head of 6<sup>th</sup> Form
- ✓ Non-teaching staff in PACE
- ✓ SAM (Student Academic Mentor)
- ✓ Older member of Vertical Tutor Group
- ✓ Prefect / Senior Student
- ✓ Friends/nominated "Buddy"
- ✓ Peer Mentor
- ✓ Cyber-mentor
- ✓ Reception Staff
- ✓ Attendance and Punctuality Practitioner (AAP)
- ✓ Technicians
- ✓ Lunchtime Supervisor
- ✓ The Anti-bullying e-mail facility (see later)

Students can feel confident that any of the above will listen to their problem and will pass on the information for action.

## **Collecting Evidence and Recording Incidents**

The person to whom the student has revealed their problem will immediately inform PACE or the Form Tutor (depending on the severity of the incident) giving as much information as possible. The information should include where possible:

Who is involved  
The nature of the bullying  
How often it has happened and for how long  
Where it takes place  
Names of witnesses

The Head of House/PACE or Form Tutor should ensure that the victim's parents are informed that day either by telephone or a note sent home with the victim. The parents should be reassured that the report is being investigated and appropriate action will be taken.

If the victim and alleged bully/bullies are in the same tutor group, the Group Tutor will hopefully be able to resolve the matter. However, the Tutor can call upon Senior Staff or a member of PACE for assistance in handling the situation.

Written statements may need to be taken from the victim and any witnesses to the bullying incident.

When in no doubt that bullying has taken place, details of the case will be passed on to the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator for monitoring purposes.

## **Actions**

The school will not respond to all incidents of bullying in the same way. In cases of minor bullying, or where intervention is early and no physical violence is involved, we recognise that the most important outcome is that the bullying should stop. Therefore, in such cases we may adopt a “**No Blame Approach**”. A member of staff will meet with the victim and the bully in order that the bully can realise the anguish and upset that has been caused. If the bully wishes to change her/his\* behaviour then, in agreement with the victim, support will be given to resolve the problem. Future meetings will be arranged so that the outcome(s) can be monitored.

In cases of more severe incidents, those where physical aggression is involved or repeated incidents of bullying behaviour by the same person, then sanctions within the school’s behaviour policy will be dispensed and parents of the bully will be informed. In extreme cases of physical and/or psychological assault, bullying behaviour can become criminal and should be reported to the Police. Following sanctions it is the expectation that the bullying will stop. If further bullying or retaliation occurs then the following actions will be taken:

- Further punishment including isolation from other students particularly during social time
- Fixed term exclusion
- A pastoral support programme (PSP) put in place which may include mentoring or counselling support from a trained counsellor or a representative from an outside agency\*
- Involvement of School Liaison Police Officer which may result in the development of an Anti-Social Behaviour Agreement
- Development of Anti-Social Behaviour Contract
- Permanent exclusion

*\*counselling support and restorative justice is always available for victims and the bully.*

## **Help, Advice and Support**

### *Support for the Victim*

- We undertake to provide support for our students by taking their concerns seriously and by dealing with the problem quickly and sensitively
- We shall try to gain support for the bullied person from friends and classmates.
- We shall inform the bullied person and their parents about the actions taken. We shall give advice as to what to do if there is a further incident.
- We offer counselling support if needed or requested.

### *Support for the Bully*

The school believes that bullying is totally unacceptable, but we recognise that it does occur and that students who bully do so for different reasons. Bullies often have low self-esteem and are, or have been, bullied themselves. It is vital that everyone recognises that it is **bullying behaviour and not the student** that the school will not tolerate. We are committed to providing any support necessary to provide the bully with the skills needed to build lasting and meaningful friendships.

## **Monitoring and Evaluating the Policy**

The Anti-bullying Co-ordinator will monitor and evaluate the policy in two ways:

1. via the Bullying Incident Database: The database will yield information such as: who are the bullies, who are the victims, what are the total numbers of each across the school and within year groups.
2. via a regular questionnaire or review: Students will be asked to complete a questionnaire, or review the policy to inform the school of the policy's effectiveness. The Policy will be reviewed annually in the light of emerging technologies.

## **Education**

Fort Pitt Grammar School has an established PSHE programme. Within the programme, Bullying is a topic that is covered in different year groups. The PSHE programme does have the flexibility to deal with aspects of bullying as and when the need arises, either within a year or learning group. To reinforce with students that such actions are unacceptable, bullying is also a theme for either whole school or year group assemblies.

### **The Anti-bullying Email Facility**

(address: [antibullying@fortpitt.medway.sch.uk](mailto:antibullying@fortpitt.medway.sch.uk))

Students or parents may use this facility if they do not wish to speak to someone directly about a bullying incident. If an incident is reported in this way, it is dealt with as a report made by telephone or letter or directly to a member of staff.

### **Responding to Incidents of Bullying Reported by Parents via the Telephone, e-mail facility or letter**

We recognise that such reports need to be dealt with as quickly as possible to allay the fears of the parent.

Therefore, the following procedures will be adopted:

1. Telephone call noted by office staff who inform the parent that a response will be given as soon as possible but definitely on the same day as the request.
2. Message passed to PACE or Head of Sixth Form who will ring the parent immediately to take details of the problem and to reassure that an investigation is underway. The Form Tutor may become involved; this will depend on the severity of the situation.
3. Statements will be collected from the victim, alleged bully and any witnesses.
4. Appropriate action based on information gathered and further investigation.
5. Contact made with parents as soon as situation has been investigated and resolved (may need "interim" calls if investigations are lengthy).
6. The Anti-bullying Co-ordinator informed of outcome.

## **Advice**

### **Advice to Staff**

We ourselves should:

- set an example of good relationships
- be assertive and have good aggression control
- make clear that aggression is unacceptable and intervene early
- be fair
- be on time for lessons, so that no bullying takes place while the students are waiting
- demonstrate caring, empathetic and respectful behaviour
- watch for signs of distress in our students – deterioration in work, isolation, a desire to be always near adults. Erratic attendance, although possibly symptomatic of other problems, may be signs that a student is suffering at the hands of a bully. Intervene early.
- if a student confides in you concerning a bullying incident, please be sympathetic, listen carefully and make a record of the reported incident. They will probably have chosen you because they trust you.
- offer the victim support and help by putting the school's procedures into operation
- while on duty, or while moving between lessons, please make an effort to visit places within the site where bullying may take place. Your presence reassures the students.
- in terms of sanctions against bullying and acts of violence, the school's procedures as outlined in the Behaviour and Sanctions Policy are to be followed
- take opportunities to talk to your tutor group about bullying and its effects on the victim and the bully

### **Advice to Students**

***\* Form Tutors should outline this advice at the start of the academic year. It should be reinforced as and when required. \****

Unfortunately, bullying takes place in all schools and in work places. It can happen to children and adults. Bullies only prosper where there is silence and fear and people do not speak out.

**We aim for Fort Pitt Grammar School to be a “speaking out” school where bullies will not be tolerated or prosper. They will be exposed because people will tell. People will tell if they are bullied and they will tell if they see bullying taking place. Everyone will make it known to bullies that they disapprove of their actions.**

**Bullies only thrive when they know that their actions will go unreported.**

- When you see someone being bullied or in distress, please take action. Watching and doing nothing can suggest that **you** support the bully.
- Rebuke the bully. If you do not wish to become involved yourself, leave the scene immediately and tell a member of staff or a responsible older student.
- Do not tolerate bullies in your circle of friends or social groups. Do not accept people who you know bully other students. Bullies will soon stop if they are made aware that **their** friends think that they are acting badly.
- If you are bullied, remember that there is nothing wrong with you. It is the bully who is inadequate.
- You must tell an adult at Fort Pitt. Choose any adult that you wish, any adult will listen. If you do not, the bullying is bound to continue. Bullies thrive on the fear of others.
- Avoid places where bullying is likely to happen.
- Never give in to demands for money or your property.
- Don't fight back. It could make matters worse. Get your friends to support you. People with a group of friends are seldom bullied.
- Make use of our Peer Mentors, Cyber Mentors, senior students in your form groups or Prefects.
- If you find it difficult to talk, why not make use of the anti-bullying e-mail facility or contact our trained Peer Mentors or Cyber Mentors on-line.
- Why don't you join in with one of the extra-curricular lunch time activities?