

Maidstone Grammar School



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Senior Managers Responsible:
Headmaster
Deputy Head teacher &
Designated Safeguarding Lead
Deputy DSL

Mr M Tomkins
Mrs J W Sewell

Mr P Conisbee/ Miss R Johnson

Link Governor:
Review Frequency:

Mrs N Wheeler
Bi-annual

Executive Summary:

This policy sets out a definition of bullying, the way that the School will respond to and handle any incidents or allegations of bullying and the responsibility of all staff to take a proactive stance against bullying in all its forms.

Bullying will not be tolerated.

Section 1: The School's Commitment

MGS aims to ensure the right of every child in the school to learn in a safe, secure and supported environment where they feel free from the fear of intimidation, harassment, victimisation or ridicule from other students, staff or from groups of individuals.

MGS aims to integrate the promotion of equality and recognition of diversity into all its activities from key policy decisions through to day-to-day operations. It does not tolerate harassment, victimisation or unjustified discrimination.

MGS acknowledges that bullying, whether physical or non-physical, may lead to lasting psychological damage for the individual. We promote a climate where bullying and violence are not tolerated and cannot flourish. This policy has been developed in full consultation with parties within the school community.

This policy details and defines our legal responsibilities for preventing and tackling bullying in regard to The Education Act 2002; The Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the Equality Act 2010. It has also been designed with significant reference to the DFE Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools; Anti-Bullying Alliance: Tackling Bullying Behaviour; Kidscape: Anti-bullying policy for school – some guidance; NSPCC: School, Academy and College Anti-bullying Policy Checklist and KCC: Model Anti-bullying Policy and the SALUS organisation

“We believe that in the vast majority of cases the staff at MGS take appropriate action over bullying. We feel that the punishments for bullying should be severe but also that they should be aimed at ensuring that bullies learn from their mistakes. We are pleased to see that the school takes bullying seriously and action is taken quickly as we feel that bullying should not ever be dismissed as something less serious. We are also glad to see that this policy recognises all types of bullying as we feel this hasn't always happened in the past. Finally, we strongly agree with the way that this policy reinforces the need for communication between the pupil, the parent and the school as we feel this is essential to combating bullying.”
MGS School Council 2012.

Section 2: The key priorities of our policy are to:

- Reduce bullying and bullying behaviour within our school by promoting an understanding of bullying and the implications of bullying amongst all members of our school community.
- Ensure that students are aware that all bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively.
- Ensure that students feel safe to learn and learn about safety, equality and diversity.
- Ensure that students abide by this Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Report back to parents regarding their concerns regarding bullying and deal promptly with complaints. We want parents to work with the school to uphold our Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Involve the whole school community in preventing bullying, responding to bullying and to support all stakeholders in promoting positive relationships and tackling negative relationships appropriately.
- Link our approach to anti-bullying both implicitly within the school ethos and philosophy and explicitly through our actions and related policies.
- Record, monitor and report incidence of bullying and regularly review the effectiveness of prevention and response to bullying; including the policy statement itself.
- Regularly ask the students (SALUS questionnaire) for their feedback on bullying in school

Section 3: Definition of bullying:

There are many definitions of bullying; we consider it to be behaviour that is:

- **Deliberately hurtful (including aggression)**
- **Repeated, often over a long period of time**
- **Difficult for the bullied to defend themselves against**
- **Has an emotional as well as physical impact**

These behaviours could be student to student, student to staff, staff to student or staff to staff.

Not all incidents of deliberately hurtful behaviour can be defined as bullying. What is not regarded as bullying is the occasional cruel remark or action. Friendship groups are often in flux and choosing new friends is not necessarily to be seen as bullying. Behaviour of this type can however, also be hurtful and

students are encouraged to discuss the matter with an appropriate adult in school so that resolution can be achieved.

Section 4: Forms of bullying covered by this policy:

All references to bullying in this policy understand that it is perpetuated by an individual or group and is an anti-social behaviour that poses a threat to emotional well being and the creation of a safe and positive learning environment. Whilst we cannot define every form of bullying, it may include:

- **Physical** – for example, hitting, kicking, taking belongings, damaging personal property or any kind of unwanted physical act carried out against another person.
- **Emotional** – for example, being unfriendly, excluding, teasing, tormenting, threatening, and spreading nasty rumours.
- **Verbal** – name calling, insults, making offensive remarks, sarcasm, teasing, text messaging, and emails or writing offensive graffiti.
- **Cyber/electronic** – all areas of electronic communication such as email, internet (e.g. social networking or X Box), texting, abuse of associated technology such as video & camera facilities and digital media etc. Everyone should be aware that this form of bullying is also illegal. We should all be aware that this form of bullying is likely to require intervention from the Police. In this context MGS is part of the Think U Know campaign and enforces its Acceptable Use Policy for electronic communication.
- **Racism** - Bullying related to a person's colour, race, culture or religion.
- **Impairment related issues** – Bullying related to a person's physical or mental impairment or difference.
- **Homophobia** – Bullying related to actual or perceived sexual orientation.
- **Additional needs** – abuse resulting from the need for any additional educational support.
- **Social related issues** – related to home circumstances such as looked after children, young carers or differing socio-economic groups.
- **Sexism** – Bullying related to gender.

This is not intended as an exhaustive list. Bullying can take many forms. Often bullies are supported by others and casual bystanders. Those who fuel the situation by creating increased levels of intimidation or victimisation will also be dealt with.

Although bullying itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to remember that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour and/or communications could be a criminal offence, especially those using electronic/cyber equipment. If we feel that an offence may have been committed we will seek assistance from the Schools' Crime Reduction officer.

Section 5 Reporting bullying.

It is essential that a student being bullied tells someone immediately. Not telling only makes the bully more powerful. Bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively. We are aware that it is not always easy to tell; but do encourage the student, their friends, or their parents to make us aware so that it can be dealt with.

Students being bullied can seek immediate support from their form tutor, Learning Manager or SSD. Reported incidents are dealt with in confidence. Students can report matters directly to any adult or prefect in school. Our students tell us that they feel confident about talking to staff and reporting any bullying that they experience to someone. They also tell us that they feel confident that it will be taken seriously, dealt with and for the great majority, the bullying will cease. It is important that they trust that we can help.

Before school, after school, breaks and lunchtimes are supervised by staff. Pupils who are bullied at these times should report the matter to a member of the duty team, another member of staff or duty prefect as soon as possible. Some pupils feel vulnerable at these times. There are areas that pupils can go to such as the School Library, Homework Club / Room 61 or one of the many clubs, all of which are supervised.

Corridor behaviour between lessons can be seen as intimidating. We have a "walk on the left" policy and do not accept barging and pushing. Students should have due care and attention to their conduct and be sensitive to others. Incidents of bullying or intimidation at these times should be reported to the nearest member of staff or prefect. All staff and prefects should be vigilant at corridor movement times and address issues that present themselves.

Parents concerned about bullying should inform the Form Tutor, Learning Manager or Student Services immediately. These key members of the Pastoral team will keep parents informed of all action taken. It is most important when dealing with parents for staff to show they take the matter seriously and respond positively while not making premature judgements.

Occasionally, bullying can become a child protection issue. Should this occur, the School's Child Protection policy will be followed and the Designated Child Protection Coordinator will deal with the matter. This may involve liaison with the Area Children's Officer, Social Services Central Referral Team and/or the police.

Behaviour and bullying are reported upon to the School Governors on an annual basis.

Section 6: Preventing bullying.

All staff are responsible for showing that bullying is unacceptable behaviour and should remember that their own conduct is an example to students. The class teacher and form tutor create an ethos of care, concern and respect, with all students valued equally. Aspects of the curriculum encourage students themselves to explore the theme of relationships. Anti-bullying is a high profile topic within our school community.

We will:

- Work with all staff and appropriate outside agencies to recognise and deal with forms of prejudice driven behaviour and bullying.
- Aim that all forms of bullying, harassment and stereotypical views are challenged.
- Actively provide curriculum opportunities to develop students' social and emotional skills, including their resilience.
- Use opportunities such as displays, Anti-Bullying Week, PSHCE, the School Library, the anti-bullying section of the school website, peer mentoring, the School Council to promote our philosophy about anti-bullying themes.
- Train all staff to identify bullying and follow school policy and procedures.
- Actively create "safe spaces" for vulnerable students.
- Ensure that our position on anti-bullying remains high profile by regularly having staff training, annually surveying our students, participating in Anti-Bullying Week and acting upon what they tell us and working closely with the Link Governor to monitor the effectiveness of what we do.

Section 7: Identifying bullying:

It is the duty of all members of the community to intervene if they become aware of bullying. If students feel unable to intervene directly, they must report to a member of staff or prefect.

There may be signs that a person is being bullied, for which all members of the school (and home) community should be vigilant. When staff are on duty at break and lunch times they should be alert for signs of bullying. Form and Duty Prefects should also be observant and report incidents.

Signs of bullying may include:

- Being frightened and unwilling to come to school.
- Having spells of being unwell, especially in the morning.
- Truancy.
- School refusing.
- Being anxious or losing self confidence.
- Not wanting to use the bus or train or a particular route to school.
- Wanting to be driven by a parent.
- Changes to normal routine.
- Crying.
- Nightmares.
- Abruptly declining academic performance.
- Wanting extra money or food.
- Stealing.
- Damaged clothes, books, equipment.
- Unexplained cuts and bruises – possibly from others or self-inflicted.

- Aggression, disruption, rudeness.
- Being frightened to talk about feelings or what is happening.
- Being nervous or “jumpy”.
- Talking about hurting themselves or running away.
- Bullying of others.

This is not intended as an exhaustive list, nor are the factors listed always symptomatic of bullying. However, those that know the person best should respond to and investigate these changes in emotions and state and bullying should be investigated as a possible cause.

Section 8: Response to Bullying Incident

Bullying incidents vary, so staff must be flexible in their approach. They must always maintain professional detachment, distinguishing between fact and opinion, as well as respecting the sensitivities of all concerned.

In all cases, the first step is to assess the situation and decide if the matter can be dealt with then and there or whether it needs a longer period of time or investigation to deal with it effectively.

In either situation, the matter must be reported to the Student Services Department. This is to ensure that either the matter is reported to parents (if appropriate), logged for future reference or for the matter to be investigated. Should further investigation be needed, the Student Services Department will involve the form tutor, Learning Manager or Senior Manager as appropriate.

The strategies used to resolve the matter will vary according to the nature of the incident and the dynamics of the individuals involved, but may include:

- Discussion and resolution with those involved.
- Contact with parents.
- Dealing restoratively with offenders and those harmed by bullying.
- Retributive punishments.
- Mentoring – Peer / Staff or Connexions Intense.
- Change of teaching group / tutor group.
- Addition to the Cause for Concern List with appropriate interventions.
- Pastoral Support Plan
- Fixed Term Exclusion.

In all matters the Student Services Department record the incident and ensure that an appropriate note of the incident/actions and outcomes are kept.

Section 9: Bullying Outside of the School Grounds.

Head teachers have a specific statutory power to discipline students for poor behaviour when not on the school premises and when they are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of staff. This can also relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises and as such this policy applies to all MGS students on their journey to and from school, fixtures, trips and extra-curricular activities.

When MGS students are bullied by other MGS students on the way to and from school, we request that students/ parents inform Student Services so that the matter can be investigated and dealt with. If the bullying involves students from another school or adults, parents are encouraged to contact the police but to also make Student Services aware so that we can support our student. In cases of bullying outside of school we routinely consider police involvement.

Section 10: Persistent Bullying

Where bullying is persistent, parents of the students involved are invited to a meeting with Student Services and/or Learning Manager to discuss the matter fully and reach agreement for the way forward. Where bullying is extreme (e.g. causing serious distress or physical injury to the victim), students may be referred to the Headmaster and they may be excluded from school for a fixed term, followed by a Pastoral Support Programme, which addresses the issues identified in the investigation. During the PSP period the perpetrator is expected to demonstrate positive progress.

Section 11: Record Keeping

In all cases the Learning Manager and/or Student Services must make a record of all incidents and place a copy on the school file. Records should show where and when incidents happened, what happened and who was involved, what action was taken and how it was followed up.

Section 12: Racial Incidents

If any incident of a racial nature occurs, it must be reported to Student Services at once. Racial incidents are logged, actioned and recorded by the Deputy Head Teacher (Staff and Students) on behalf of the Local Authority.

Section 13: Monitoring and Review

Our Anti-Bullying Policy and protocols are standing items at the CFC meetings, Pastoral team meetings and at the School Council. These group meets three times each academic year. The policy is also monitored by the Deputy Head Teacher (Staff and Students) and the School Council through discussion and annual bullying audits carried out as part of the school's self-review process. The policy will be formally reviewed bi-annually by the Deputy Head Teacher (Staff and Students) in collaboration with the Link Governor.

Section 14: Making a complaint.

If a parent believes that MGS has not effectively addressed an issue of bullying, they should contact, in the first instance, the Headmaster (in writing) who will fully investigate the complaint and respond. Parents may also raise their complaint with the Chair of Governors via the Clerk to Governors at the school address.

Section 15: Additional information.

MGS has developed an anti-bullying section on the school website. This contains additional information and hyperlinks to other appropriate websites.

http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tackling_bullying_behaviour.aspx

<http://www.childline.org.uk/Explore/Bullying/Pages/Bullyinginfo.aspx>

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/safetolearn/>

http://www.nspcc.org.uk/help-and-advice/directory/directory_wda85709.html#school

<http://www.kidscape.org.uk>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents/bullying/>

<http://www.kidscape.org.uk>

<http://www.samaritans.org.uk>

With reference and credit to:

DFE 2014 Preventing and Tackling Bullying.

Anti-Bullying Alliance: Tackling Bullying Behaviour.

Kidscape: Anti-bullying policy for school – some guidance.

NSPCC: School, Academy and College Anti-bullying Policy Checklist.

KCC: Model Anti-bullying Policy 2014

SALUS improving the lives of children