

Anti-Bullying Policy

The school aims to create an environment that is free of bullying. All staff – teaching and support – should be alert to bullying behaviour and follow the school’s anti-bullying policy, whose objectives support the above aim.

This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

Bullying behaviour

This is any behaviour which seeks to intimidate or humiliate and which is repeated, intentional, unprovoked, malicious, such as to cause distress, unhappiness or insecurity. Bullying may be:

- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching or any use of violence.
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, teasing, insulting, making threats, spreading rumours, making comments which are racist, sexist or homophobic in nature or which focus on disabilities or religious or cultural differences.
- Emotional - excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books or belongings including money), being unfriendly, graffiti, gestures, ‘put downs’.
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or comments of a sexual, sexist or homophobic nature.
- Electronic or ‘cyber’ bullying is bullying of any of the above types which makes use of electronic forms of communication e.g. text messaging, MSN messaging, posting offensive materials on the internet. This is a particularly powerful and invasive form of bullying.

Bullying may also be:

- Sexual: talking to or touching someone in a sexually inappropriate way
- Sexist: related to a person's gender or gender reassignment
- racist:, or relating to someone's religion, belief or culture
- related to a person's sexual orientation (homophobic)
- related to pregnancy and maternity
- related to a person's home circumstances or
- related to a person's disability, special educational needs, learning difficulty, health or appearance

Bullying can occur between pupils or between members of staff and may also be carried out by pupils towards staff or vice versa.

Encouraging other people to engage in bullying behaviour is also bullying.

The effects of bullying

All bullying is damaging to those who experience it and those who perpetrate it. The consequences of bullying can last for many years, can undermine a person’s confidence for life and can lead to lasting psychological damage and even suicide. There are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.

Principles/Education

Leighton Park is committed to providing a caring, safe and friendly environment for everyone so that learning can take place in a secure and supportive atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable. Whenever it occurs all pupils should feel that they are able to tell a member of staff or friend and know that incidents will be investigated promptly and effectively. It is important that bullying is recognised and openly confronted. As well as staff supporting pupils who are being bullied, pupils who bully should be made aware that their behaviour is unacceptable and they in turn should be helped to find different ways of behaving.

We hope to achieve a bullying-free community through the continuing development of the strong Quaker ethos within the school, which engenders a respect for one another and recognition of the value of each member of the community. Within an open and caring atmosphere positive self-images are naturally encouraged. The school itself is small and the sub-division within it of the houses creates an intimate environment where positive values are fostered. Within the day-to-day life of the school both the peer groups and staff play a vital part in monitoring those who are most vulnerable. It is important that pupils know that they will be valued, heard and cared for. We all have a part to play in creating a bullying-free community. The PHSCE ("Your Life") programme includes units of work on bullying.

Procedures:

What to do if you witness or suspect that bullying is taking place

Pupils

If you are the victim of bullying, you should not keep quiet about it. Speak to your parents, to a teacher or to another adult such as your Matron/Housemother, the School Counsellor or one of the Graduate Residents. The school will seek to provide you with the appropriate support.

If you are not yourself a victim but know or suspect that it is happening to others, you have a duty to report it to a teacher or another adult. Standing by and letting the bullying continue is almost as bad as taking an active part in it.

If you are guilty of bullying and realise that what you have been doing is wrong, you should speak to a teacher or another adult and ask them to help you deal with the situation. You will only make the situation worse if you let things continue and eventually get caught.

Parents

If you know or suspect that your son/daughter may be a victim of bullying, please report the matter to the school.

If you know or suspect that another pupil known to your son/daughter may be a victim of bullying, please report the matter to the school.

If you know or suspect that your son/daughter is involved in bullying, please report the matter to the school. It will be in his/her best interests to try to bring the matter to a speedy conclusion by having it dealt with where it is happening.

Your child's Tutor or Housemaster would be the right person to speak to first.

Staff

When bullying is identified or reported action must be taken immediately so that the victim feels supported and reassured.

- Housemasters and Tutors should be notified and depending on the seriousness of the reported incident, the Deputy Head should be informed.
- The victim should be reassured, any injury addressed and kept safe.
- Written accounts of the reported incident should be made by all involved: the victim of an incident, anyone accused of bullying behaviour and any witnesses to the incident. These accounts should be written under supervision and as soon as an incident is reported, preferably before those involved are able to communicate with one another.
- Each should then be interviewed by the Deputy Head or Housemaster in the presence of their Tutor if possible; if not another member of staff may be asked to be present.
- Those who are found to have been bullying should be given a verbal warning in the presence of their Tutor or Housemaster, by the Deputy Head. The warning will remind the pupil of the school's policy on bullying and that another offence will involve parents and may result in exclusion from school. The formality of the warning and the seriousness with which bullying behaviour is dealt with is usually sufficient to prevent a recurrence of such behaviour.
- Parents may be involved at any stage, but should there be a recurrence by the same pupil parents will always be involved.
- Sanctions against those who bully will include appropriate restorative justice as well as other measures such as gating and detentions. The aim should be for relationships to be mended. Cases will, however, be dealt with on a case by case basis and if necessary, exclusion may be the appropriate sanction.
- Pupils who bully will be given advice and support to help them manage their behaviour but extreme or persistent bullying is likely to result in a period of suspension from school or even permanent exclusion.
- Notes of all action taken must be recorded and placed on pupil files. Copies should be given to Housemasters for House files.
- Bullying can become a Child Protection Issue and in this circumstance, cross-reference should be made with the school's policy on Child Protection and Safeguarding.
- Serious bullying incidents are reported to the Deputy Head (Pastoral and Boarding) to enable problems to be identified.

Prevention of Bullying

The school has an overriding duty of care towards its pupils and appropriate action must be taken to protect them.

We seek to prevent bullying by:

- Promoting an atmosphere in which 'telling' is safe and acceptable
- Being vigilant in our supervision of all areas of the school, being on duty, in our classrooms and in the Houses in good time
- Reminding pupils frequently about the behaviour that is expected of them, stressing that they should be friendly and respectful towards each other
- Using information gathered from reported incidents as pointers to improvements that can be made to our approach
- Conscious teaching of social skills through role-play, drama, literature etc
- Using role play and discussion to help pupils to develop strategies for dealing with bullying and to understand those who bully to appreciate the feelings of the victim
- Building the confidence of pupils by valuing them and their work as individuals

- Using Collect, Beliefs and Values and PHSCE (“Your Life”) lessons to promote values, differences, beliefs, moral issues
- Teachers providing positive role models to pupils
- Ensuring clear communication between all members of staff regarding the behaviour of pupils
- Recording all incidents concisely and consistently to monitor effectively the behaviour of pupils and to evaluate the methods adopted to combat bullying
- Supportive procedures for dealing effectively with individual concerns raised by parents
- Clear communication with parents, especially when trying to work together to improve behaviour
- Being vigilant to signs of unhappiness, distress or change of character in pupils
- Providing Inset training which allows staff to understand and identify bullying, appreciate its consequences and follow the school’s anti-bullying policy
- The school has a staff duty rota to cover times and places where bullying may occur.

This policy has been drawn up having regard to Standard 2 of the National Minimum Standards (revised September 2010). This policy should be read in conjunction with the school’s Behaviour and Expectations Policy.

Review

This Policy will be reviewed every two years by the Deputy Head to assess its effectiveness, and will be updated as necessary. In undertaking the review the Deputy Head will take into account the results of the evaluation of the methods adopted to combat bullying as well as any changes in legislation and / or statutory guidance and other relevant information gathered.

September 2011