



## COTHAM SCHOOL

### ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

#### Version control

The table below shows the history of the document and the changes made at each version:

Version	Date	Summary of changes
	Sept. 2016	
	January 2019	Change to definition of bullying to cover a wider range Section added on cyber-bullying Sections added on specific guidance to students and teachers Section added in relation to the Equality Act 2010 Section added in relation to Peer-on-peer abuse
	July 2020	Changes made following consultation with vulnerable students: Introducing the phrase on the balance of probabilities to make it explicit that the LC will have to make a judgement on the best evidence available. Reference to 'bully button' changed to 'Whisper button'

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Approved by Governors: September 2016

Policy Author: Domini Leong

Review Date: July 2021

Reviewed by: Aurora Reid

## Rationale

Cotham School believes that it is an entitlement of all students to be educated in an environment that is safe and free from bullying behaviour. We do not accept acts of bullying at Cotham School. Every person should expect to be able to come to school and feel safe and free from intimidation in any form, thus enabling each individual to achieve their full potential academically and personally.

## Aims of this policy:

- To assist in creating an ethos in which attending Cotham School is a positive experience for all members of our community.
- To make it clear that all forms of bullying are unacceptable at Cotham School.
- To enable everyone to feel safe while at Cotham School and to encourage students to report all incidents of bullying.
- To deal with each incident of bullying as effectively as possible, taking into consideration the needs of all parties and of our community, and, as a result, to reduce the incidents of bullying.
- To support and protect those that experience bullying and ensure they are listened to.
- To help and support students displaying bullying behaviour to change their attitudes and understand why it needs to change.
- To liaise with parents and other appropriate members of the school community.
- To ensure that all members of our community feel responsible for helping to reduce bullying.

All members of the school community are expected to uphold this policy by establishing and maintaining an atmosphere conducive to learning in a secure and orderly environment. Courtesy and mutual respect is expected from all.

## Roles and Responsibilities

The Headteacher is ultimately responsible for the wellbeing of all students and staff. All staff, students, parents and governors should be made aware of the policy and the issues associated with bullying in schools.

Everyone has a responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all students and all staff have a duty of care to ensure that our students are protected from harm. All staff should be alert to any potential incident of bullying and intervene when instances are noticed.

Governors have a duty to be fully informed on matters concerning anti-bullying.

## Definition of Bullying

Bullying is a form of anti-social behaviour that has no place in this school. Bullying is defined as **deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over time**, where it is difficult for those experiencing bullying to deal with it by themselves. It can take many forms but the main types of bullying are:

- physical – hitting, kicking
- taking or damaging belongings

- verbal – name calling, insulting, making offensive remarks, making threats
- misuse of new technologies – sending texts on mobile phones, sending hurtful messages by email
- indirect – repeatedly spreading nasty stories about someone or excluding from social groups, or repeatedly being made the subject of malicious rumours.

Bullying can make those that experience it feel distressed, nervous, hurt or worried. The bully's actions may or may not be on purpose and may involve encouraging others to cause upset.

When incidences of bullying are analysed across the UK, the following themes are often found to be used as a basis for the bullying or aggression:

- Race
- Ethnicity
- Skin colour
- Religion
- Culture
- Nationality
- Gender
- Sexuality
- Ability
- Disability
- Family
- Success
- Failure
- Appearance – size, weight, height, dress, personal features
- Language/speech
- Social class

It is important to understand that bullying is rarely about one-off incidents. Whilst these may be very serious and must always be dealt with, **bullying behaviour involves one person or group having all the power and someone else having none (an imbalance of power)**, leaving someone feeling repeatedly helpless to prevent it or put a stop to it.

### **How does Cotham School deal with Bullying issues?**

Bullying behaviour is unacceptable by any member of the school community as no person has the right to make another feel uncomfortable or unhappy. We will raise the issue of bullying on a regular and proportionate basis throughout the school year in a variety of contexts and groups. We will deal with incidents of bullying swiftly, proportionately, discreetly and work to change poor attitudes where they exist and monitor our effectiveness. From their arrival in Year 7, students are given the very clear message that any form of bullying or unpleasant behaviour is neither welcome nor tolerated at Cotham School. This is reiterated in assemblies, in tutor groups and through the curriculum. We hold an annual anti-bullying week in November and mark National Safer Internet Day in February. The school also operates a continuous 'anti-bullying' campaign through its PSHE programme, tutor programme, information in classrooms and around the school, and assemblies. All students are thus clearly aware that such anti-social behaviour must not be instigated or tolerated. If

incidents do occur they must be reported; they will be dealt with immediately following the guidelines on bullying for staff and students that follow.

Student-voice questionnaires are conducted each year on students' experiences and perceptions of bullying. Students are encouraged to report bullying in person to their tutor, Learning Co-ordinator (LC) or another member of staff who they feel comfortable with; however, students can also report bullying via the 'Whisper button' on the school website (a link under the quick links page is sent directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and followed up within 24 hours).

### **Guidelines for Students**

You have a right to feel comfortable and safe at school, as well as on your journey to and from school. If you are being bullied **YOU MUST TELL.**

**Who should you tell?** Your tutor, a subject teacher, your LC or another member of staff with whom you feel comfortable - you can choose.

**What should you do if you are frightened to tell a teacher?** Tell a friend; tell your parents. They can tell the teacher for you.

You can report a concern any time (anonymously if you prefer) through the 'Whisper button' available on the quick links page of the Cotham School website.

What should you do if the bully or bullies threaten they will hurt you more if you tell? Still tell - AND tell the teacher about these threats. If you don't tell, the bullying will go on. You must **TELL EVERY TIME.**

**The BULLY IS WRONG, NOT YOU. YOU WILL WIN - as long as you TELL EVERY TIME.**

**Advice if you 'have behaved like' a bully:**

- Are you being unkind or cruel to someone you know?
- Have you thought about how it makes them feel?
- Do you know that calling someone a name can be just as bad (or worse) as hitting them?
- Are you acting like a bully because it makes you feel big or important? Can you think of any other ways to be strong?

### **Stop bullying**

The next time you are tempted to say or do something that might hurt or upset someone, stop for a moment and think: if someone treated you like this, how would you feel? What if they behaved differently and smiled or chatted to you instead? Try to understand the other person's point of view. Different isn't worse - it's just different. People who are different in some way to you are just the same inside. Take a look around. Everyone is different. We all have feelings - we are all human. What do you get when you bully others?

You might think you're winning lots of friends; however, have you thought that they may act in a friendly way but inside they might be afraid of you. Is that the kind of friendship you want? How can you change your behaviour?

Is something about your own life bothering you? Are you unhappy for some reason? If so, then that's what you may need to focus on. Talk to someone and get help – there are many adults at school willing to listen to you and help you if there are problems in your life that might be making you behave unkindly to others. Remember, if you respect others, they will like and respect you.

### **Guidelines for staff**

The term staff includes teachers and support staff. We all have a duty to implement the school policy on bullying. Every complaint of bullying must be taken seriously.

- The member of staff receiving such a complaint must respond initially and where necessary pass the matter on to the tutor or Learning Co-ordinator.
- If the incident warrants it, the member of staff who has received the complaint should take statements and help collect evidence before passing the matter to the Learning Coordinators of all students involved.
- When behaviour issues are logged on the school's SIMs system, where bullying is suspected to be a factor, staff are required to log the incident as bullying and then also copy the incident to the school's Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS) under the appropriate category e.g. alleged bullying, racism, homophobia, inappropriate physical contact, peer-on-peer abuse.
- When there is not a behaviour issue but bullying is suspected, then the incident should be logged straight onto CPOMS under the category of 'alleged bullying'.
- At this point, the Learning Co-ordinator or a member of the Core Safeguarding team, will take up the incident and see it through to completion.
- Any available witnesses will be interviewed separately from each other and from the student reporting bullying, and their statements will be signed and dated by them.
- A decision should then be made by the Learning Coordinator as to whether on the balance of probabilities the circumstances indicate that bullying, as distinct from other forms of unacceptable behaviour, has occurred. In the course of this procedure enquiries should be made to ascertain whether or not the alleged bully has been involved in similar incidents involving this or other students.
- When bullying is clearly identified, the **student reporting** that they feel bullied **must be reassured** that this will not be allowed to happen again and that they should tell an adult if any further incident takes place.
- The student reporting bullying may be offered support to restore self-esteem and confidence
- Where appropriate a restorative justice meeting will be held, where the students are given the opportunity to establish a positive relationship.
- Parents will usually be kept informed.
- Sanctions will be used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties. Sanctions will be in accordance with those listed in the school's Behaviour for Learning Policy.
- Where appropriate, recourse to external agencies may be taken e.g. SARI or a suitable anti-bullying mentoring programme or workshop.
- In situations where incidents happen outside of school or involve a factor external to the school, including cyber-bullying, the school will consider referral to the police.
- Safeguarding procedures will be followed when child protection concerns arise.

### **Staff investigating should consider the following:**

- Listen to and don't judge the student reporting bullying or the student alleged to have bullied until you have heard both sides of the story and feel educated enough to make an informed decision.
- Talk to the student alleged to have bullied.
- Tell the student reporting the bullying what you are doing to make sure that they feel comfortable with every step taken.
- Talk to parents of the student reporting bullying and the student alleged to have bullied.
- Be there for the student reporting bullying or the student alleged to have bullied to talk to if they feel it necessary.
- Be aware of the possibility of a long and complex history behind the story.
- Be ready for the possibility of the student reporting bullying becoming the student alleged to have bullied.

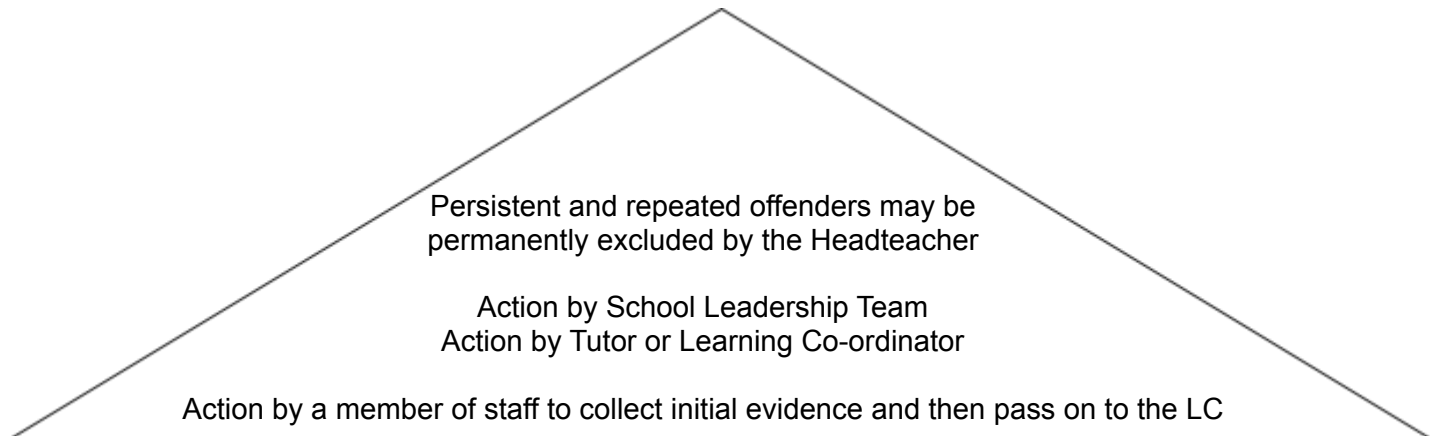
### **Some further thoughts for teachers and students:**

- The student alleged to have bullied may be unaware of the unhappiness they are causing. Be constructive. It might be desirable to involve the whole class and/or the tutor/teacher to plan an activity for the tutor group that could support the bully and victim that could focus on relationships (consult the pastoral team and see the PSHE material on the subject).
- Keep an eye on the student experiencing bullying. Check formally whether the bullying is continuing or has ceased. Be aware that students experiencing bullying are sometimes reluctant to admit that bullying is continuing because they feel that 'telling' has not worked and has made things worse.
- Advise the student experiencing bullying on his or her comportment and behaviour if necessary but do not blame the complainant whose self-esteem may already be low as a result of the bullying.

### **Working with the bully and sanctions**

Once the bully is identified, steps should be taken to change their attitude and behaviour, as well as ensuring access to any support that is required. Trained school staff are available to perform 'restorative justice' activities between the students concerned. Parent/carer permission does not need to be sought for this though it would be expected by the school in most circumstances.

**A hierarchy of sanctions will be applied by the following members of staff:**



**Factors to consider when determining the appropriate sanctions consider:**

- Our policy should be followed consistently but we must consider the Special Educational Needs of all parties involved.
- The impact on the student experiencing bullying: was the bully acting anonymously, was the material widely circulated and humiliating, how difficult was controlling the spread of the material?
- The motivation of the bully: was the incident unintentional or retaliation to bullying behaviour from others?
- Technology-specific sanctions for students engaged in cyber-bullying behaviour could include limiting internet access for a period of time or removing the right to bring a mobile phone into school.

### **Equalities Duty**

The school takes very seriously bullying that falls under the protected characteristics laid out in the Equality Act 2010. Bullying of a racist, sexist, disablist or homophobic nature is not tolerated. Schools have a legal duty to ensure homophobic bullying is dealt with in schools. Under the Education and Inspections Act (2006), Headteachers, with the advice and guidance of governors and the assistance of school staff, must identify and implement measures to promote good behaviour, respect for others and self-discipline amongst students and to prevent all forms of bullying. This includes the prevention of homophobic bullying. Homophobic language will always be challenged and, where necessary, punished by staff. When such language occurs, staff will remind students that:

- Homophobic remarks and language is offensive and will not be tolerated at Cotham School.
- If a student makes homophobic remarks directed at a student then the member of staff should refer the matter to the School Leadership Team where the student in question will receive a sanction.
- Racist language or behaviour will immediately be met with a sanction. Racist bullies will be invited to take part in activities to help them change attitudes and to examine their behaviour.

- Persistent racist or homophobic attitudes will lead to a student being permanently excluded.

The school educates students thoroughly on tolerance and respect for diversity, often involving other organisations such as SARI, TIGER and Each Education to support in our education.

### **Cyber & Electronic/Telephone Bullying**

The use of the internet (cyber-bullying) and mobile phones to bully is a very serious matter and can constitute a criminal offence. In the United Kingdom, there are criminal laws that can apply in terms of harassment or threatening and menacing communications, which would apply to students of secondary school age. Students involved in electronic bullying (where a student records a bullying incident on a mobile phone) will receive a high level sanction such as a Headteacher's Detention or a Fixed Term Exclusion as follows:

- for the student(s) carrying out the bullying;
- for the student recording the bullying on a device;
- for any student found to have viewed or passed on any recording and who does not immediately report this to the school.

At Cotham School, we will deal with reported cases of cyber-bullying in the following way:

- Supporting the student experiencing bullying
- Give reassurance that the student has done the right thing by telling someone
- The member of staff referring should work closely with the Learning Co-ordinator of the alleged bully/bullies. Between them, these two colleagues will collect witness statements and evidence, as the student reporting the bullying may only feel comfortable discussing it at length with the member of staff they initially reported the bullying to.
- The Learning Co-ordinator taking charge of the incident will contact the parents/carers of the student reporting bullying to reassure them that the matter has been reported and will be dealt with.
- Make sure the student reporting the issue knows not to retaliate or return the message and ask the student reporting the bullying to think about what information might be available on the internet about them.
- Help the student to keep relevant evidence for any investigation (e.g. by not deleting messages/files they've received and by taking screen capture shots and noting web addresses of online cyber-bullying instances). Please ask for advice if you require help with technical aspects.
- Check the student understands simple ways to prevent it from happening again, e.g. by changing contact details, blocking contacts or leaving a chat room. Please ask for advice if you require help with technical aspects.
- Take action to contain the incident when content has been circulated:
  - If you know who the student responsible is, ask them to remove the content after you have had the opportunity to capture screenshots and witness content where possible.
  - Contact the host (e.g. the social networking site) to make a report to get the content taken down.



- The Learning Co-ordinator can use disciplinary powers to confiscate phones that are being used to cyber-bully. Also ask the student to tell you who they have sent messages on to.
- In cases of illegal content, contact the police, who can determine what needs to be kept for evidential purposes.

### **Peer-on-peer abuse**

The 2018 update to the DfE's Keeping Children Safe in Education now recognises that children can abuse other children. This is generally referred to as peer-on-peer abuse and can take many forms. This can include (but is not limited to) bullying (including cyberbullying); sexual violence and sexual harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexting and initiating/hazing type violence and rituals. This policy recognises that bullying of any sort is a form of abuse and should thus be treated very seriously as a Safeguarding concern, one that will require support for the student experiencing bullying and also require support for the bully.

### **Equality Impact Statement**

We will do all we can to ensure that this policy does not discriminate, directly or indirectly. On review we shall assess and consult relevant stakeholders on the likely impact of the policy on the promotion or race equality, equality for disabled persons, gender equality and community cohesion using an appropriate Equality Impact Assessment. The policy may be amended as a result of this assessment.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

The Academy will review this policy every 3 years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. It may also be reviewed and amended in consultation with all stakeholders, in the light of events or experience.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following key documents:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Safeguarding Policy and related Safeguarding documents
- The Student Code of Conduct including ICT