



**St George's**  
School Edgbaston

# ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Revised: September 2019



This policy is applicable to the whole school including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), out of school care, the breakfast club, the afterschool clubs and all other activities provided by the school, inclusive of those outside of the normal school hours.

## **Introduction**

St George's School is a Rights Respecting School and supports the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; these articles were considered when writing this policy:

**Article 2:** You have the right to protection against discrimination

**Article 14:** You have the right to think and believe what you choose and also to practise your religion, as long as you are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights

**Article 19:** You have the right to be protected from being hurt or badly treated

**Article 23:** Children with a disability have the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and, as far as possible independence, and to play an active part in the community

**Article 28:** You have the right to an education

**Article 31:** You have the right to relax and play

The Anti-Bullying policy is designed to create a safe and secure environment with an atmosphere of mutual trust where every person feels comfortable and is able to work to fulfil their potential.

Under the Equality Act 2010, new duties on schools and other public bodies came into force in April 2011. The Act strengthens and simplifies existing equality legislation. The Act brings together existing duties not to discriminate on grounds of race, disability and gender, with which schools are already bound to comply, and it extends these to include duties not to discriminate on the grounds of age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and gender reassignment. It places a requirement on governing bodies and proprietors of schools to eliminate discrimination and promote equal opportunities. It applies to school policies for tackling prejudice based bullying. St George's School staff and trustees will take heed of the Act and ensure all types of bullying are recognised and acted upon.

At St George's School we seek to create a culture in which bullying of any kind, either against students or adults is not accepted by any member of the school. Our school community is based upon friendship, fair play and equality. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, physical threats, verbal taunts, violence, victimisation and any form of harassment so that every one of our students can develop their full potential. We are therefore strongly committed

to the avoidance of bullying in all its forms. We provide a clear framework for dealing with incidents of bullying, ensuring that bullies are dealt with swiftly and firmly. Our straightforward procedures make it easy to report bullying, including cyber bullying and bullying outside of school.

We expect our students to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed, but orderly, atmosphere. All students should care for and support each other. Our school prides itself on its respect, mutual tolerance, acceptance and responsibility in all relationships. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting St George's School in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and home has consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together. This policy is available to parents of students and prospective students on request or via our website. It is also provided to staff prior to their commencing duties at St George's School and it is accessible at all times. Records are kept to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach or to enable patterns to be identified. Bullying in any form will not be tolerated. We are a 'TELLING SCHOOL'. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell an appropriate adult. We treat all of our students and their parents fairly and with consideration, and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the school. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable.

### **Aims and Objectives**

- to ensure that all students, parents and staff are aware of the definition of bullying and the distressing effect it has on its victims, and that they are kept up to date with new and important information
- to ensure that all students' parents and staff are fully aware of the referral procedures for reporting bullying incidents and the strategies adopted for supporting those involved in these incidents
- to establish a climate in which students who are being bullied, or think another student is being bullied, can speak to an appropriately trained person in the full knowledge that they will be listened to and receive a prompt, appropriate and sensitive response
- to outline the school's strategy for responding to any incidents which are reported
- to create a school community where bullying is recognised as unacceptable and where all students can feel valued, secure and happy
- Ensure important information in relation to bullying incidents are shared amongst necessary Pastoral Staff and that data and information is stored securely

## **Context, Roles and Responsibility**

This policy draws on Department for Education guidance *Preventing and tackling bullying Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies* (July 2017) and *Cyber-bullying; Advice for headteachers and school staff* (2014). The policy is compliant with The Education and Inspections Act 2006, The Equality Act 2010, SEND Code of Practice, Jan 2015: 0 to 25 years and Keeping Children Safe in Education, Sept 2018. It should also be read alongside other school policies such as the Behaviour Policy (Upper and Lower School), Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Curriculum Policies.

### **The Board of Trustees**

Will monitor incidents of bullying and will offer guidance they consider to promote the safeguarding and welfare of students.

### **The Headteachers and senior pastoral staff**

Will have overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation. Incidents will be managed according to the circumstances recorded and will be reviewed to see whether patterns emerge from the nature of the bullying. They will raise awareness of staff through training, so that the principles of the school policy are understood, legal responsibilities are known, action is defined to resolve and prevent problems, and sources of support are available; where appropriate, the school will invest in specialised skills to understand the needs of their students, including those with special educational needs or disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students.

### **The Trustees, Headteachers and staff**

Will share responsibility for ensuring that the policy and procedures are followed and are consistently and fairly applied, as well as reviewed annually (or as and when guidance/legislation changes).

### **Parents and Guardians**

Will be encouraged to work in partnership with the school in order that high standards of behaviour are maintained both in and out of school, address any incidents of bullying that occur and support the school to ensure that students respect both similarities and differences between themselves and other members of the school and the wider community. Bulletins and Online Safety tips will be shared at Parent's Evenings and updates will be sent home when required.

### **Students**

Will be expected to take responsibility for their own behaviour and will be made fully aware of the school's anti-bullying policy, the procedures arising from cases of

bullying and the rationale behind them. All students have a collective responsibility to ensure that they are considerate towards one another and respectful of each other's differences. All students follow a programme which includes anti-bullying themes and content during school assemblies, tutor time and PSHE programmes. This programme promotes student online safety and encourages them to build resilience to issues often experienced by young people whilst using technology in and out of school and whilst online.

## **Definitions of Bullying**

Bullying behaviour can be defined as an action, or number of repeated actions, causing harm to people or relationships. This behaviour could be intentional or unintentional and may be on-going. The definition equally encompasses physical or non-physical actions, therefore the harm could be physical, emotional (or both) and result in long term psychological impact, potentially damaging academic achievement and the student's emotional well-being and/or mental health.

Bullying has many forms – e.g. physical, verbal, emotional, prejudicial or electronic (cyber-bullying via social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photos or e-mails) and may include race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, SEND or disability. A bully is someone who targets others and makes them unhappy or frightened over a period of time. They may do this by:

- Threatening behaviour
- Using physical violence
- Using unpleasant words – insulting comments, mocking verbal abuse
- Stealing property, taking or demanding money
- Deliberately upsetting people
- Sending unpleasant text messages / images
- Using the internet / social media/ technology / to spread unpleasant rumours (cyber bullying)
- Sexting / upskirting – Sharing of images

Single one off incidents are not usually bullying, but if they are repeated, they must be reported and dealt with by the school.

We are aware that bullying can happen anywhere, but we strongly believe that wherever students are they have the right to be safe. Nobody has the right to make anyone unhappy. Staff need to, make it clear that bullying is bullying and should never be tolerated or passed off as “banter” or “part of growing up”.

Bullying behaviour can be direct or indirect, simple or complex.

Direct bullying includes physical threats, verbal insults or taunts and directly contacting a person with obscene or insulting messages by using, for example, a mobile phone.

Indirect bullying includes persistently ignoring a student so that they feel socially isolated, spreading malicious rumours, or insults, often via social network sites on the Internet, or writing offensive graffiti.

Cyber-bullying uses technology to harm a person, group of people or a relationship and can happen both inside and outside of school and at any time of the day or night. The school has installed monitoring software on all school owned devices to monitor usage of computers and report any inappropriate use.

Bullying differs from 'friendship fall-out', or other aggressive behaviour.

Where there is bullying:

- there is normally a power imbalance so that the victim does not feel able to defend him/herself
- it is usually persistent but could be an isolated incident
- it might relate to racism, homophobia, LGBT, sexism, ageism
- it might relate to a disability or a special educational need (SEN). In these examples, victims may not be aware of being bullied
- there is normally an intention to cause harm, although there may be instances when there is a lack of awareness that the actions are harmful

All bullying issues, whatever their nature, will be treated with equal importance and the response will be based upon the guidelines in the policy.

Children can be vulnerable to abuse by their peers and therefore we view all incidents of bullying as a safeguarding concern. This is most likely to include, but not limited to: bullying (including cyber bullying), gender based violence / sexual assaults (e.g. students being sexually touched / assaulted or being subject to initiation / hazing type violence) and sexting.

Such abuse should be taken as seriously as abuse by adults and should be subject to the same child protection procedures. For more information please see our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, available from the Schools website.

Where it is clear that a child is suffering, or in danger of suffering significant harm then the situation should be viewed as a child protection issue and appropriate action taken.

## **Signs and Symptoms**

A victim may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. These may include:

- reluctance to attend school
- unwillingness to travel on the school bus / public transport
- truancy from specific lessons
- damage to clothing or possessions
- 'losing' more items than usual
- unexplained bruises / swellings
- deterioration of school work / academic performance
- being afraid to use the Internet
- becoming jittery about receiving text messages
- unkempt uniform
- bullying towards siblings
- taking money without permission

Symptoms may include:

- loss of appetite
- headaches
- stomach aches
- stammering
- sudden changes in behaviour
- lack of confidence
- signs of depression
- nervous / edginess
- difficulty in concentration
- lack of motivation to complete work

## **Reporting Bullying**

Students are encouraged to report all forms of bullying, whether carried out by another student or by an adult. The hope is that by reporting the problem in the first instance, this will become the first step in empowering the victim to overcome the

bullying. Parents are encouraged and can contact the school in confidence to talk about any concern they may have.

Whenever a student experiences bullying, it should be reported immediately, whether by the victim, friends of the victim, bystanders or via parents, who should contact the school. Information can be reported to a member of staff, Class/Form Tutor, a Head of House or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Students can now contact staff anonymously via the following e-mail address: [bullying@sgse.co.uk](mailto:bullying@sgse.co.uk). All staff should first immediately secure the safety of the young person before following the school's procedures.

For cases involving Lower School students, staff should report incidents to the Head of Lower School. For cases involving Upper School student's staff should report incidents to the Head of House, Head of Sixth Form or Mr Nicholls SLT. These staff will notify the Headmaster and keep him informed of the schools response.

When a problem occurs outside of school and immediate advice or support is required, Childline (0800 1111) for example, would provide an alternative, particularly if a child did not feel comfortable discussing the matter with a parent, family member or carer. The school would hope that the child would feel able to discuss the matter with a member of staff upon their return to school.

## **Responding to Bullying**

### **1. What should a student do if they witness bullying behaviour?**

- I. Support the victim by offering your friendship and make it clear that in your opinion what is happening to them is wrong
- II. Encourage them to speak out on their own behalf by confronting the bully, or with their permission confront the bully yourself
- III. Accompany the victim to a member of staff or trusted adult or suggest that you see a senior member of staff on their behalf

### **2. Procedures for a member of staff should you witness an incident of bullying or it is reported to you:**

- I. Reassure and support the student(s) involved
- II. Advise them that you are required to pass the details on to the relevant member of staff Head of House, Mr Nicholls SLT (Upper School) or Mrs Sadiq Headteacher (Lower School)
- III. Inform the appropriate member of staff immediately

If you are the victim of cyber-bullying:

- tell a teacher or parent about the bullying
- do not reply to bullying messages
- do not retaliate by sending unpleasant messages back
- switch off your phone – it's the most effective way to block the texting bully
- use the blocking and reporting facilities of social networking sites
- if necessary, change your contact details such as your instant messaging identity or your mobile phone number
- save the evidence. Keep printed copies, screen shots, records and dates of offensive messages, pictures and online conversations. If you do not want to take a screen shot because it may alert the bully that you are taking action, you can use another phone or camera to record the bullying message or image. Refer to the 'BBB locked' section of [How to report cyberbullying](#)

#### A Procedure for Parents:

If you are concerned about your child being bullied the facts of the situation are vital as, without these, it is hard to take action.

- I. Calmly talk to your child about the experience
- II. Make a note of what is said, particularly names, places, times, how often and the form the bullying takes
- III. Reassure your child that he/she has done the right thing. They should not feel guilty
- IV. Explain to your child that any further incidents should be reported immediately to a member of staff
- V. Do not hesitate to contact the school so that bullying can be dealt with appropriately
- VI. Read the notes on cyber-bullying above. Evidence will be needed by the school for intervention to be effective and this evidence may also be needed by internet service providers and mobile phone companies. If the cyber-bullying breaks the law, the evidence may be needed by the police for an investigation. Please note that internet service providers will only remove text or photos if they break the law or the company's own terms and conditions. The government has advice for parents and carers about how to address cyberbullying: [Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying](#)

### **3. What will Happen?**

- I. All incidents are recorded and investigated

- II. If the investigation confirms a bullying incident has taken place parents are contacted
- III. The school response will include support for the victim and if required mentoring and counselling
- IV. The investigation will try to understand the reasons for the bullying in order to support the rehabilitation of the bully and to prevent a reoccurrence of their behaviour
- V. Sanctions will depend upon the individual incident but may include:
  - Lunchtime or after school detentions
  - Restriction of access around the school site
  - Transfer of form or teaching group
  - Internal Exclusion
  - Exclusion from after school clubs or Aftercare
  - Formal School Warning
  - Fixed Term Exclusion
  - Permanent Exclusion
- VI. If it is deemed appropriate and agreed with the victim and parents the school may adopt a restorative approach with those involved
- VII. The school will monitor students involved following a bullying incident

The school will attempt to resolve bullying issues using the above procedure and sanctions. However, in very serious cases it may be necessary to make a report and refer a matter to Social Services or the Police.

St George's School is committed to creating a school community where bullying is recognised as unacceptable and where all students can feel valued, secure and happy. In regards to online and cyber bullying within school, teachers are expected to monitor content, contact and conduct when using technology as part of the school's wider safeguarding strategy.

**Our stated commitment is that when a young person speaks out about bullying:**

- **They will be listened to**
- **Their concerns will be taken seriously**
- **The matters will be investigated**
- **Together we will find a way to tackle it**
- **Someone will be there to help and support the young person**

**To be reviewed September 2020  
or as and when statutory  
guidance / legislation changes**