

Southend High School for Boys



Anti-Bullying Policy

October 2023

RATIONALE

The community of Southend High School for Boys considers bullying in all its forms intolerable.

Bullying must be addressed because:

- it is wrong;
- it makes individuals unhappy;
- it can destroy an individual's self-esteem;
- individuals who are being bullied are unlikely to concentrate fully on their work and achieve success;
- individuals may try to avoid being bullied by not attending school;
- individuals who observe unchallenged bullying behaviour may copy this anti-social behaviour;
- bullying behaviour runs contrary to the ethos of the school.

This policy explains:

- the school's attitude to bullying behaviour;
- its aim to establish a caring and supportive ethos within the school;
- the procedures to be followed when bullying has taken place.

This policy also acknowledges that as well as bullying amongst pupils, bullying can take place between children and adults, and amongst adults. Guidance about how staff can raise concerns about bullying by other adults can be found in the Staff Handbook.

The Headteacher has a duty to do all that is reasonable to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees and so action will also be taken to prevent bullying occurring in the workplace.

AIM

Southend High School for Boys promotes an anti-bullying culture where the bullying of adults, children or young people is not tolerated in any form. The aim of this policy is to outline the measures that we take to ensure that all members of the school feel supported and safe within our environment.

At Southend High School for Boys, we:

- encourage a caring, tolerant community;
- protect the safety and happiness of pupils and staff;
- raise awareness of bullying behaviour so that all members of the community are alert to the signs of bullying, and know what to do should an issue arise;
- challenge all bullying behaviour;
- have clear procedures in place to deal with bullying behaviour;
- promote the school's '2020 Vision', which rejects bullying behaviour and encourages co-operative behaviour;
- enable pupils to develop their individual talents and abilities in a safe and tolerant community.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

The school defines bullying as persistent and intentional behaviour that targets another individual or group, either physically or emotionally. This behaviour can leave the victim feeling defenceless, fearful or isolated. It may be overt and intimidatory, but it can also be subtle and hidden. It may occur directly, or through cyber-technology. This can also include peer-on-peer abuse.

Bullying may be:

Physical: pushing and shoving, kicking, tripping up, hitting, pinching, any form of violence, threats, taking belongings.

Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing.

Emotional: tormenting, name calling, threatening ridicule, spreading nasty stories, humiliation, exclusion from groups or activities.

Racial: racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, exclusion from groups or activities.

Sexual: unwanted physical contact, abusive comments, 'homophobic' taunting.

Cyber: involving any of the above via social media, e-mail, chat rooms, text/voice messaging, doctoring of picture or video.

Three common characteristics of bullying behaviour are:

- it is deliberately hurtful behaviour
- it is repeated often over a period of time
- it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

PREJUDICE-BASED BULLYING

Bullying behaviour can often be rooted in prejudice and discrimination due to difference or perceived difference. A prejudice-related incident is defined as any incident that is perceived to be prejudice-related by the victims or any other person. Whilst it is recognised that not all incidents will be intentionally harmful or have a direct target, the school is committed to challenging all forms of discrimination.

This definition empowers everyone to act. The inclusion of 'or any other person' means that anyone who perceives a prejudice-related incident to have occurred can instigate an investigation. This also ensures that incidents where there is no direct target, such as racist graffiti or casual use of homophobic language, are also acted on.

Prejudice-based bullying includes the protected characteristics (Equalities Act 2010), but prejudice can and does extend beyond these and can lead to bullying for many other reasons. Examples of prejudice-based bullying may include:

- Body image and physical appearance
- Disablist bullying
- Sexual orientation & homophobic bullying
- Racial bullying
- Religion and belief
- Sexism
- Gender identity and transphobic bullying
- Young Carers
- Socio-economic prejudice

CREATING A CARING AND SUPPORTIVE ETHOS

The school aims to foster a positive set of values, such as integrity, tolerance and compassion for others. Various school policies and systems, including the '2020 Vision' statement, the Behaviour Policy and the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) programme, underpin the right of every individual to be free from bullying and help promote an anti-bullying ethos in the school.

It is important that we create an atmosphere in the school where pupils who are being bullied, or others who know about it, feel that they will be listened to and believed, and that action taken will be swift but sensitive to their concerns.

Individuals must be encouraged to come forward and report any bullying which they have experienced or observed. An open and frank atmosphere within tutor groups is one effective way of enabling this to happen. Pupils can be advised to speak to an appropriate older person, rather than staff, in the first instance if they would prefer this.

SIGNS TO LOOK OUT FOR IN PUPILS

Despite attempts to encourage openness, pupils who are being bullied will not always be prepared to tell those in authority. Staff and others should be alert to the following signs in a pupil, which ***might*** indicate that bullying is taking place:

- unwillingness to come to school;
- withdrawn, isolated behaviour or a desire to remain with adults;
- decrease in confidence or self-esteem;
- changes to usual routine;
- complaining about missing possessions;
- refusal to talk about a problem;
- becomes easily distressed, or more aggressive or disruptive;
- damaged or incomplete work;
- physical signs such as bruising.

Staff need to take special note if these difficulties are associated with a pupil who may have particular special needs, a pupil from a minority racial group or cultural background, or where there may be other indications of sexual harassment.

WHERE BULLYING IS SUSPECTED TOWARDS A PUPIL

Each case will be treated individually and depending on circumstances, one or more of the following strategies will be employed:

- If a member of staff receives an allegation of bullying, he/she should take the matter seriously and offer immediate support.
- If the matter appears of minor proportions, the member of staff could try to resolve the problem by mediating with the pupils involved, for example helping two pupils to find their own solution to a minor disagreement. This issue should then be reported to the Form Tutor/ Year Leader/Pastoral Administrator to ensure that the issue is logged appropriately. It is important to check whether this is an isolated event or part of a pattern. In all cases, appropriate follow-up checks will then be made.

- If the issue is more serious, the member of staff should immediately inform the Year Leader/Director of Key Stage. It is important that a serious allegation is thoroughly and properly investigated. The Year Leader should decide who is to carry out that investigation. The pupils (both antagonist and victim) should then be interviewed and asked to provide short, written accounts. Any witnesses should also be asked to provide a written statement.
- The Year Leader, in liaison with the Director of Key Stage and, if appropriate, Deputy Head (Pastoral), should then decide upon the appropriate course of action.

TAKING APPROPRIATE ACTION

It is important to make it clear to:

- the victim, that revenge is not appropriate;
- the antagonist, that the bullying behaviour is unacceptable.

A judgement will be taken as to appropriate action. This could include:

- seeking an apology from the antagonist (this may be a written apology with an undertaking that bullying will not recur);
- informing the parents of the victim and the antagonist;
- giving a detention to the antagonist;
- recommending to the Headteacher an exclusion of the antagonist for an appropriate amount of time;
- providing support, perhaps mentoring, for the victim of the bullying;
- providing support, perhaps counselling, for the antagonist;
- monitoring the situation over subsequent weeks;
- ensuring the victim knows how to deal with any further incidents in the meantime.

All incidents should be recorded on the central anti-bullying record, and the 'check in' procedure outlined below adopted.

RECORDING INCIDENTS OF BULLYING TOWARDS PUPILS

The Year Leader, or the person investigating the bullying incident, should ensure that the information is passed to the administrator with oversight of the central record.

From this point, monthly check-ins with both the victim and antagonist will be made and the outcome recorded centrally.

The issue will be marked as 'closed' once 6 months have passed without further incident. At this point, a letter will be sent to the parents of both parties highlighting that whilst the issue is marked as closed, both students should let the school know of any further issues.

The incident will remain on the log even when marked as closed. This is to enable future reference to be made if necessary.

COMBATING BULLYING IN THE WORK-PLACE

Various school policies, for example the Staff Code of Conduct, the Whistleblowing Policy and the Equalities & Diversity Policy, should reduce the possibility of bullying amongst teaching and support staff.

However, staff who feel that they are the victims of bullying by their colleagues, by management or by students, should be encouraged to speak to a senior member of staff in the first instance. If the matter cannot be resolved through mediation, resort to the school's Staff Grievance Procedures may be necessary.

MONITORING AND EVALUATING THE EXTENT OF BULLYING WITHIN THE SCHOOL AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL'S ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

The number of logged incidents will be reviewed termly by the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and subsequently reported to Governors.

The effectiveness of this Anti-bullying Policy will be m regularly by the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and the Headteacher.