Anti-bullying Strategy

1. Introduction

1.1   The School believes that the community's three core values – trust, encouragement and mutual respect – help us to create an environment where every one of our pupils feels safe to learn and able to develop their full potential.

1.2   Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination are the antitheses of the school's core values and will not be tolerated. We take great pains to treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration; we expect them to reciprocate this towards each other, the staff and the School.

1.3   Vertical boarding houses naturally involve pupils of different ages and mixed age dorms similarly involve pupils of varying ages sharing space within the house. House staff monitor and promote respectful and supportive relations across age boundaries. Each of the nine senior houses has a peer support network through the system of house families.

1.4   **Everyone in our community – including Members of Council, teaching and support staff, parents, guardians and all the pupils – is expected to support this policy, to understand what bullying is and what they should do if bullying arises.**

1.5   The School recognises that allegations of bullying may, in the most serious cases, raise a safeguarding and child protection concern and due care and attention should be given to allegations of bullying in this regard.

2. Scope

2.1   This policy applies to all pupils and all members of the School community, irrespective of their age and whether or not a pupil is in the care of the School when / if bullying behaviour occurs.

2.2   While this policy focuses mainly on the bullying of pupils by other pupils, it is recognised that other forms of bullying may occur and the core principles contained in the policy apply.

3. Publication

3.1   This policy is available on the School website. This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

4. Definitions and forms of bullying

4.1   Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. (DfE Preventing and tackling bullying 2017 - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/623895/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf)

The School recognises that instances that are not repeated but are carried out in a systematic manner or represent a perceived difference in power can have a significant impact even if they are not repeated over time.

Bullying can be so serious that it causes psychological damage, eating disorders, self-harm and even suicide and, whilst bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.

Bullying can involve complicity (silently accepting) which falls short of direct participation. Not all bullying is deliberate or intended to hurt. Some individuals may see their hurtful conduct as "teasing" or "a game" or dismiss the actions as ''banter'' with the other person.

Bullying is often hidden and subtle; it can also be overt and obvious. All these forms of bullying are equally unacceptable.

Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time and can involve anyone – pupils, other young people, staff and parents.

Prejudice-based bullying because of a protected characteristic focus upon specific or perceived characteristics such as:

Race: relating to someone's religion, belief or culture
Nationality: relating to someone's nationality or their heritage
Religion: related to a person's religion, observances, practices
Sex: related to a person's gender or gender reassignment
Homophobia/transphobia: relating to a person's sexual orientation or gender status
Disability: Focussing in a hurtful way on someone's disability, special educational needs.
Other: Bullying can focus upon any characteristic or perceived characteristic such as a person's body shape, hair colour, economic circumstances and it is important to consider the impact and intention of comments which do not correspond to any prescribed characteristic.

4.2   There are many forms of bullying. Some are listed below, but it is recognised that there may be other forms:

Verbal: name-calling, unfriendly teasing, sarcastic praise, taunting, derogatory language, mocking, making offensive comments, spreading hurtful rumours or manipulating others to do so
Exclusionary Behaviour: excluding from groups or conversations, intimidating, isolating, tormenting (hiding books, threatening gestures)
Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, social ostracism, tormenting
General unkindness: sending nasty notes/emails/text messages, sending offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet
Coercive Control: deliberately silencing, overprotection
Financial: demanding money
Sexual: Unwanted physical contact, talking to or touching someone in a sexually inappropriate way
Physical: hitting, kicking, pushing or any use of aggressive behaviour
Peer Pressure: pressure to confirm
Cyber-bullying: using electronic media, text message, mobile phone photos/video clips, mobile phone calls, email, Chat Rooms, instant messaging and websites (blogs), personal websites, social networking sites to deliberately upset someone, intimidate or cause harm to their reputation.

5. Cyber-bullying

5.1   Cyber-bullying is the use of information and communications technology, particularly mobile telephones and the internet, to deliberately upset someone else. The subject of cyber-bullying is also specifically referred to in the Responsible Use of Digital Devices for Pupils Policy.

Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.

Cyber-bullying could involve communications by various electronic media.

Examples of cyber-bullying are:

- pupils who set up website pages and invite others to post derogatory comments about a pupil;
- pupils who film fights or assaults (also known as 'happy slapping') and circulate them via mobile phones;
- pupils sending insulting and vicious messages via texting, instant messaging;
- pupils posting fake and obscene photographs of the target on a social networking site;
- pupils hacking into social networking sites and removing and circulating material which may be embarrassing or personal;
- Pupils hacking or cloning email accounts

Cyber bullying can have a particularly pervasive affect because:

- Cyber bullying is very threatening as there is no safe haven for the person being bullied.
- Cyber bullying can follow people into their private space and at all hours.
- Cyber bullies can communicate their messages to a wide audience with remarkable speed and can often remain unidentifiable and unseen.
- Once a message is on the Internet, it is very difficult to erase it totally; cyber-bullying therefore threatens for life the target's reputation.

The School reserves the right to confiscate a mobile device if we suspect it has been used in a cyber-bullying or other harmful incident. Cyber-Bullying is not acceptable and incidents will be investigated. If cyber-bullying is found to have taken place appropriate action will be taken by the School. If the school believes a criminal offence to have been committed, we will contact the police.

6. Bullying and Safeguarding

6.1   Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. If there is a child protection concern, the member of staff must always inform the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), in accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Even where safeguarding and child protection is not considered to be an issue, the School may need to draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a pupil doing the bullying. The bullying log is reviewed regularly by the safeguarding committee.

6.2   **Peer on peer abuse:** All staff are made aware of the potential links between bullying and peer on peer abuse. Peer on peer abuse can manifest itself through bullying incidents. Where peer on peer abuse is suspected or where there are concerns they are reported to the DSL and appropriate measures will be taken in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

6.3   **Sexual Harassment:** The term sexual harassment means "pupil on pupil unwanted conduct of a sexual nature", that can occur online and offline, and violates a pupil's dignity, makes them feel intimidated, humiliated and can create a sexualised environment.

Examples of sexual harassment can include:

- Sexual comments such as making remarks about appearance
- Telling sexual jokes
- Making unwanted or inappropriate physical contact
- Online sexual harassment – sharing of sexual images and videos, inappropriate comments on social media

7. SEND pupils

7.1   The School is aware of the need to monitor the requirements and needs of pupils with special educational needs or with disabilities. Evidence suggests that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities can be disproportionally impacted by behaviours such as bullying. The School monitors behavioural trends across the School. The boarding houses and pastoral support networks support pupils and work with the Learning Enhancement department to offer additional support.

8. Signs of bullying

8.1   Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:
- Unwillingness to return to school;
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet;
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually poor work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others;
- Books, bags, money and other belongings suddenly go "missing", or are damaged;
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary);
- Diminished levels of self-confidence;
- Frequent visits to the Medical Centre with symptoms which may relate to stress or anxiety, such as stomach pains or headaches;
- Unexplained cuts and bruises;
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance or late arrival to class;
- Choosing the company of adults rather than peers;
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact;
- Difficulty in sleeping or experiencing nightmares; or
- Talking of suicide or running away from home or school.

Although there may be other causes of some of the above symptoms, a repetition or combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated and reported/recorded as appropriate. A pupil's Housemistress will normally be in the best position to investigate these issues and record the outcome on CPOMS.

9. Dealing with bullying

9.1   Pupils
Reporting concerns: The best way to stop bullying is to get help so we actively encourage pupils who feel they are being bullied or who are worried another pupil is being bullied to report the issue to a member of staff without delay.

Pupils are encouraged to speak with their parents if they have concerns about bullying.

Pupils can also speak with other members of the School Community including the peer listeners, School prefect, an appropriate member of their House Mons team or a School Counsellor.

Pupil actions: Where a pupil feels that a member of the community is acting in a manner that is unkind they are encouraged to
- Highlight this and explain that the behaviour "is making them feel uncomfortable", that their words and/or actions "are unkind".
- The pupil should walk away quietly and confidently, even if they don't feel confident at the time.
- Remember that a bully may continue with this behaviour if they feel that it will not be challenged. It is important that pupils have confidence to raise the issues with staff.

Responding to a report of bullying: All allegations of bullying will be taken seriously by the School and investigated fully. It is important that a pupil who raises a bullying concern is reassured and feels safe to ask for help. The member of staff to whom bullying is reported or who first discovers the situation, must inform an appropriate senior member of the pastoral team as soon as possible. This would normally be the pupil's Housemistress.

The School will operate an approach which does not assign blame whilst they investigate what has occurred. The School recognises that there can be occasions when relationships between people become fraught, and that actions can be interpreted in various ways.

A member of the pastoral team will normally see the target and any witnesses without delay and form an initial view of the allegation. It is possible at this stage that there has been a misunderstanding which can be explained sympathetically to the alleged target with advice to the alleged bully.

If the member of the pastoral team feels that the target's complaint is justified the member of staff will take appropriate further actions.

Following actions may include:
- Written accounts will be taken, initially from the target and any witnesses but also from the perpetrator
- Pupils (target, witnesses and perpetrators) may be interviewed by staff and their accounts taken
- A resolution meeting/s may be arranged. These may follow the Anatol Pikas method or variations thereof (a description of this method is set out in the appendix)
- Warnings and sanctions will be applied to the perpetrator as appropriate reflecting the nature of the bullying that has occurred.
- Where a perpetrator does not change their behaviour and continues to act in a bullying manner further sanctions will be applied in line with School's Behaviour, Rewards and Discipline Policy.
- In a very serious case or a case of persistent bullying, a pupil may, after a fair hearing, be required to leave the School permanently in accordance with the School's Exclusion, Removal and Review Policy.

Support for the victim of bullying: There are a variety of people who can offer support to pupils who feel that they have been bullied. These include:
- House staff
- Heads of Year
- School Chaplain
- Tutors or any other trusted member of staff
- School Counsellors
- School's independent listener
- Head Girl Team
- Peer listeners
- External support providers including
  - Childline 0800 1111
  - Kidscape 08451 205204

Support for the perpetrator: The School recognises that the perpetrator may also need additional support. This may be to help modify future behaviour and/or for them to explore some of the reasons behind their actions. The methods of support listed above will be available to the perpetrator.

9.2 Parents

Parents will often be the first to hear if a child is feeling bullied. Parents who are concerned that their child, or another child, is being bullied should inform their daughter's Housemistress or any senior member of staff without delay.

The School will treat all allegations of bullying seriously and begin to investigate as soon as possible. We ask parents to afford the School time to investigate thoroughly and to follow our policy to allow us to support pupils appropriately.

Parents may be invited into School to discuss the matter with an appropriate member of staff. Where a pupil has been involved in perpetrating an incident of bullying it can be helpful in moderating future behaviour where parents and the School work in unison.

We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures and all other aspects and results of our anti-bullying strategy.

10. Recording and monitoring

Concerns about bullying are recorded by the Deputy Head (Pupils) on the School's bullying log. This log records all incidents where bullying is investigated and does not assume any particular outcome.
Details of particular incidents are recorded on pupils' files on CPOMS.
Where appropriate details are recorded in the School's safeguarding files.
The safeguarding committee discuss bullying trends on a termly basis.
All records are kept in-line with the School's Data Protection Policy, Data Retention Policy and Parents and Pupils Privacy Notice

11. Preventative measures

11.1   The School bans initiation ceremonies designed to cause pain, anxiety or humiliation. All new pupils are briefed clearly on the School's expected standards of behaviour and are provided with the School's Behaviour, Rewards and Discipline Policy as well as this Anti-Bullying Strategy. Community rules set clear values and standards, and these are upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life. There is a summary of the Anti-Bullying Strategy in each boarding house.

11.2   Anti-Bullying week is celebrated in School to highlight core messages. Internet safety week explores issues related to cyber-bullying. Guidance for pupils to prevent bullying and to encourage positive behaviour is delivered through year group assemblies, house orders and tutors.

11.3   The Health Centre, boarding Houses, MyWycombe and various other locations throughout School display advice on where pupils can seek help including details of confidential helplines and websites connecting to external specialists, such as Childline, Kidscape, Get Connected, the Samaritans and the School's Independent Listener.

11.4   The Wellbeing programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the School. The programme is structured to enforce the message about community involvement and taking care of each other. Other lessons, particularly RS, English and Drama highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable and by developing social skills.

11.5   The School takes the following measures to prevent cyber-bullying specifically:
- Expects all pupils to read, understand and sign the Responsible Use of Digital Devices for Pupils Policy.
- Issues all pupils with their own personal school email address which is to be used for all School communication.
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyber-bullying in ICT lessons, which covers blocking, removing contacts from 'buddy' lists and sharing personal data.
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe.
- Does not permit mobile phones to be used in classrooms (unless expressly asked by the particular teacher), public areas of the school, or where they may cause annoyance to others.
- The use of cameras on mobile phones is not allowed in washing and changing areas, or in the bedrooms of boarding houses.
- Certain sites are blocked by a filtering system and pupils' use is monitored .
- Pupils are aware that the School sanctions are applied for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet.

12. Staff

12.1   It is recognised that a staff member could be a target and on occasion may be perceived to be guilty of bullying. Staff members who are concerned about being bullied or harassed should refer to the School's Staff Handbook.

12.2   All new members of staff are given guidance on the School's Anti-Bullying Strategy and how to respond to allegations of bullying. They are required to read the School's policy as part of their induction. Housemistresses are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority, and are alert to possible signs of bullying.

12.3   The pastoral team gives support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both targets and bullies. These staff include Tutors who meet their small group of Tutees regularly.

12.4   Staff are updated on the School's anti-bullying strategy and its importance annually through safeguarding training and are aware of the importance of being alert to inappropriate language, behaviour and how to respond to bullying.

13. Complaints

13.1   Parents and pupils are encouraged to use the School's Complaints Procedure (which is published on The School website) if they feel that any concerns about bullying (or anything else) are not being addressed properly.

14. Review

14.1   This Policy will be reviewed at least annually to assess its effectiveness, and will be updated as necessary.

Member of staff	Deputy Head (Pupils)
Updated	September 2020
Next review date	July 2021
Council Committee	EP&B Committee

VERSION: ANTI /10a/v8/20

Related Policies
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
Online Safety Policy
Responsible Use of Digital Devices Policy
Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy and Procedures
Exclusion, Removal and Review Policy.
SEND Policy
Equal Opportunities Policy
Wellbeing and Mental Health Policy
Acceptable Use of IT for Staff
Data Protection Policy
Data Retention Policy
Complaints Policy