



Fettes College Preparatory School

Counter-Bullying Policy 2023/2024

Updated July 2023

Review Date July 2024

Responsibility: Prep Pastoral Leadership Team

PREP COUNTER-BULLYING POLICY

Statement of Intent

The School Aims state that our students should, *“feel valued, have a sense of personal worth, be thoughtful and considerate of the needs of others”*.

The provision of a counter bullying policy alongside School discipline policies and the pastoral care network is intended to translate this aim into practice and is based on the Equality Act 2010 which enshrines that there must not be discrimination against the nine protected characteristics. This policy has also been guided by the Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland’s Children and Young People (2017).

Fettes College is committed to providing a safe, caring environment free from disruption, violence and harassment so that every one of our students can develop their potential. We expect our students to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so they can learn in a relaxed but orderly atmosphere. All students should care for and support each other.

Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination will not be accepted. Where necessary we will apply the sanctions described in our *Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy* for behaviour that constitutes bullying or harassment of any kind.

Aims

The aims of the counter bullying policy are:

- maintain a happy, well-ordered and caring environment with strong community values that ensures all members of the school feel accepted, so that bullying will be less likely;
- create awareness of bullying through the curriculum and other activities;
- developing effective strategies for recognising and supporting those who have experienced bullying behaviour and for recognising and dealing with those who have displayed bullying behaviours;
- ensuring that all staff know what to do if they encounter bullying, that they treat incidents seriously and are consistent in how they deal with them;
- ensure that all pupils have knowledge of and access to a support structure within Houses, form groups and School so they can share worries and seek help;
- to reduce incidents of bullying through implementation of appropriate strategies (preventative and proactive as well as reactive)
- assure pupils and parents that all reports of bullying will be treated seriously;

What is Bullying?

Bullying can take many forms and mean different things to different people, but two major elements are that:

1. bullying is characterised by repeated, persistent behaviour which intimidates individuals or

groups through verbal, emotional or physical aggression;
and/or

2. bullying is the deliberate, conscious desire to intentionally hurt another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

However, a bullying incident only has to happen once to have a lasting impact on a person. (National Approach/RespectMe 2015)

This behaviour can take the form of ethnic, religious, cultural, sexual, sexist, homophobic, transphobic or special educational needs/disability related bullying. It might occur directly through verbal comments (hate speech), physical contact or intimidation and emotional means (by ignoring, leaving out or spreading rumours). It can also occur through the use of technology (social websites, email, photos & videos, text/messaging apps).

Bullying can therefore often be hidden. It can happen anywhere and at any time. It can cause serious and lasting psychological damage. Harassment and threatening behaviour are criminal offences. We always treat incidents of bullying seriously.

Bullying is both behaviour and impact; the impact is on a person's capacity to feel in control of themselves. This is what we term as their sense of 'agency'. Bullying takes place in the context of relationships; it is behaviour that can make people feel hurt, threatened, frightened and left out. This behaviour happens face to face and online. (RespectMe, 2015)

What is Cyber Bullying?

Bullying can also involve the use of social media (cyber bullying) and includes areas such as email and internet chatroom misuse; mobile threats by text messaging and calls and the misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities. Cyberbullying can be defined as the use of Information and Communications Technology, particularly smartphones and the Internet, deliberately to upset someone else. However, it differs in several significant ways from face-to-face bullying: the invasion of home and personal space; the difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages; the size of the audience; perceived anonymity; and even the profile of the person doing the bullying and their target. Both the school's [Counter-Bullying Policy](#) and the School's [ICT Acceptable Use Policy](#), specifically bans any form of cyberbullying.

Signs of Bullying

- not wishing to return to school
- displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- a significant change in work habits, classroom behaviour, quality of preps
- change to established habits (e.g. giving up something that they have previously really enjoyed doing)

- frequent visits to Matron/Medical Centre with generalised symptoms of headaches or stomach pains
- unexplained cuts and bruises
- choosing the company of adults over their peers
- poor eye contact and displaying repressed body language

Those Who May Be Vulnerable to Bullying

- new to a class or the school
- different in appearance, speech or background from other students
- students who suffer from low self-esteem
- those younger and weaker than the rest of their peer group
- those who may be isolated, lonely or loners
- evidently more or less academically able than others

What action to take

We believe that **all** of us within the Fettes community, staff and students alike, have an individual and collective responsibility to contribute positively to a tolerant, inclusive school society. It is not solely the responsibility of those affected to bring about social change but rather our shared responsibility to foster a culture of allyship.

The principle underlying this policy is that a pupil who is a victim of bullying or who witnesses bullying should feel free to approach any member of Staff for help. The member of Staff is expected to act in accordance with School policy. All Staff have a vital part to play in making it clear that:

- bullying behaviour is not acceptable
- being vigilant and proactive if they note what may be developing into a bullying relationship
- being approachable and willing to offer help and support-

Everyone's levels of resilience are different and so it is important to assess the impact on an individual; age and professional judgement are important factors in doing this, and issues should be addressed after talking through the situation and possible responses with anyone who may feel bullied. Bullying behaviour must also be addressed with those who display it.

Those who have Experienced Bullying Behaviour

Pupils who feel that they are being bullied should feel confident about reporting any incident and should have as many ways of reporting it as possible, for example:

- Telling a friend who will pass the information on to an adult
- Telling a Prefect who will pass the information on
- Telling their Tutor
- Telling their Houseparent
- Telling another member of Staff
- Telling the Medical Centre staff
- Telling the Head of Pastoral Care or Chaplain

Parents of children who may be being bullied need to know:

- The School procedures for dealing with bullying
- The signs to look out for
- That they should contact the Tutor or Houseparent and know that the matter will be taken seriously and investigated

Pupils need to know:

- School procedures for dealing with bullying
- The signs to look out for in case one of their friends is being bullied
- That they will be taken seriously
- That any information they give will be dealt with as confidentially as possible

Staff

Members of Staff should follow School procedures when a bullying incident arises (see below). Staff should also:

- Discuss issues of bullying if they arise in the classroom
- Note and report any significant changes in a pupil's behaviour to Tutor and/or Houseparent
- Watch for interaction between pupils which may indicate bullying
- Note and report to Tutor and/or House Staff any pupils who are consistently left out by others
- Be vigilant in informing Tutor and/or House Staff of unexplained absences from classes or activities

Investigating and Managing Incidents of Bullying

Staff to whom the incident is reported or who first discover the incident need to:

- Make the situation safe, if necessary
- Refer the incident to the Deputy Head.
- Be prepared to give a full account of the incident to the Deputy Head. It is best to write, sign and date an account of any serious incident as soon as possible after reporting it. Give a copy to the Deputy Head and keep a copy for yourself.
- Deputy Head takes responsibility for investigating the incident, although this may be carried out by another member of staff if more appropriate
- Bully and bullied may be brought together to try to talk it through

- Clear guidelines for future behaviour are issued to both parties and a code of conduct agreed. Both pupils should know that the situation will be monitored and know of consequences for bully if bullying continues
- Parents of bully and bullied may be informed
- Head of Pastoral Care will be informed
- Deputy Head or delegate (Tutor) monitors situation
- Referral to Head if no improvement is seen. Possible suspension or permanent exclusion in extreme cases

NB: not all incidents will require use of all these steps.

Prevention

- Wherever possible, the emphasis will be on preventative measures rather than simply reacting to incidents of bullying when they occur
- All pupils will take part in PSHE sessions on bullying in the Prep School. PSHE Sessions will also occur on cyberbullying
- Members of staff who are CEOP Ambassadors to help with the prevention of cyberbullying
- Houseparents and Tutors will reinforce the content of PSHE sessions within Tutor periods.
- All Staff should be vigilant and willing to take appropriate action if they suspect that a pupil is being bullied.

Monitoring and Complaints

This policy is reviewed on an annual basis to evaluate its effectiveness and eliminate unlawful discrimination. Anyone who feels that the School has breached this policy should appeal in accordance with the School's Complaints Policy.

ARR/ERD
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 Review July 24