

# Sydenham School Anti-Bullying Policy



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# **Anti-Bullying Policy**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Behaviour and Equalities Opportunities Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

## **1. Anti-bullying vision**

Bullying at school can have a profound effect on children's lives and can have a lasting effect on them into adulthood. It can undermine their self-confidence and self-esteem and can sometimes result in them finding difficulties in managing their relationships with others. This policy on Anti-Bullying has been drawn up within the school's ethos of promoting positive behaviour. The Sydenham School community is based on an ethos of mutual respect, self-regulation and kindness and is committed to providing a safe and productive learning environment for all. We want our young people to learn and socialise without fear or bullying in an inclusive school community, where they value each other's differences, support one another, treat each other with respect, empathy and compassion and refrain from bullying other people. We are a telling school.

## **2. Statement of Philosophy and Ethos**

We have a zero tolerance to bullying, harassment, victimisation or discrimination of any kind and work hard to prevent these or to tackle them if they occur. It is entirely contrary to the values and principles we work and live by. All members of the school community have a right to work in a secure and caring environment. They also have a responsibility to contribute, in whatever way they can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment.

## **3. Aims**

Our anti-bullying aims are:

1. To prevent and deal effectively with bullying
2. To create a culture at Sydenham where students and staff see bullying as unacceptable and challenge it whenever it occurs
3. To support young people's ability to deal with bullying and to strengthen their emotional resilience

## **4. What do we mean by Bullying?**

The Department of Education defines Bullying as 'behaviour by an individual or group repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally'.

It takes many forms and can include:

- Physically hurting or attempting to hurt, harm or humiliate another person or damaging their property
- Verbal abuse such as name-calling, taunting, mocking or writing unkind notes

- Emotional manipulation such as isolating someone or spreading malicious rumours about them, building negative alliances based on gossip, or deliberately betraying former confidences to humiliate or isolate another student
- Cyberbullying, i.e. via social networking websites, phone calls, text messages, photographs, emails or use of AI (Artificial Intelligence)
- Unpleasant remarks or actions related to any of the following:
  - Race, religion or culture
  - Sex (i.e. talking to or touching someone in a sexually inappropriate way)
  - Gender, gender identity or perceived gender identity
  - Sexual orientation (e.g. homophobic bullying)
  - Disability or Special Educational Needs
  - Intellectual or other abilities
  - Appearance or health conditions
  - Being adopted or a carer

Any behaviour that a reasonable bystander would say was intended to hurt or upset the victim is wrong and could constitute bullying, including complicity that may fall short of participating directly in the bullying. It is no justification that the perpetrator says or believes that the victim is not upset or hurt by his or her actions or words.

Much bullying is performed in subtle ways, which are not easy to detect; an instigator can use a simple look, word or gesture to a victim to signal an intended threat or insult. Some students are adept at changing a bullying situation into an apparently harmless one when an adult approaches. This makes it all the more important for the victim or another student to be able to come forward to report bullying, and for staff and parents to be alert to symptoms of bullying.

Bullying is always hurtful to the victim and damaging to the whole school community. Anyone and everyone who is involved in or witnesses bullying is affected by it. It can cause great distress, unhappiness and psychological damage and at its worst lead to suicide. It can also be a criminal offence, for example if the behaviour amounts to harassment or threatening behaviour.

#### 4.1. Definition of cyber bullying

Cyber bullying can be defined as the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else.

#### 4.2 Generative artificial intelligence (AI)

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, students and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Bard.

Sydenham School recognises that AI has many uses to help students learn, but may also have the potential to be used to bully others. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.

Any use of AI to bully, harass, or harm members of our school community will be treated as a serious breach of our behaviour policy, and appropriate action will be taken in line with our established procedures

#### 4.2. Bullying Behaviour

There are two types of bullying behaviour – direct and indirect.

- Direct bullying takes place between the victim and the wrongdoer(s).
- Indirect bullying is often associated with social rejection by a wider peer group, harmful messages through gossip, sending or spreading messages and images through mobile phones and the internet, deliberate exclusion from social activity and isolation.

#### 4.3. How does Bullying differ from teasing or friendship difficulties?

Sometimes students can feel hurt or upset because they have been teased, have fallen out with a friend or have participated in behaviour that all parties have consented to and enjoy. This is not the same as bullying. Bullying is:

- Deliberately intended to hurt or humiliate
- Involves an imbalance of power that makes it hard for the victim to defend themselves
- Is usually persistent but there can be one-off incidences
- Often involves no remorse or acknowledgement of the victim's feelings or a lack of empathy

#### 4.4 Anti-bullying and Harmful Sexual Behaviours, including sexual violence and harassment

Sydenham School will not tolerate any sexual violence and sexual harassment within our school community. Expectations of school members with regards to this are explicitly taught within the pastoral curriculum and reinforced with staff via the Sydenham School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

For the purpose of this policy, Sydenham School uses the definitions of sexual violence contained within Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) and this includes rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault.

For the purpose of this policy, Sydenham School uses the definitions of child-on-child sexual harassment contained within Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025). Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment and this includes (although not an exhaustive list):

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names;
- sexual "jokes" or taunting;
- physical behaviour, such as:
  - deliberately brushing against someone
  - interfering with someone's clothes (we will consider if this crosses a line into sexual violence, and consider the experience of the victim)
  - displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexually explicit nature;
- upskirting (this is a criminal offence)
- online sexual harassment such as:
  - sharing of sexual images and videos (taking and sharing indecent images or videos of those under 18 is a criminal offence)
  - sexualised online bullying

- unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media;
- sexual exploitation; coercion and threats.

Sydenham School will judge the sanctions for students in relation to sexism, sexual violence and sexual harassment in the context of the categories of incident as made clear in the Sydenham School Behaviour Policy. When determining which sanction is most appropriate, school staff will be considered, proportionate, supportive and listen carefully to all students involved. In some instances, additional sanctions, such as a move of class, may be required. We will listen carefully to victims of sexual harassment or sexual violence before making decisions. Sanctions will be determined on a case-by-case basis with the final decision being made by the school.

## 5. How do we deal with Bullying?

Sydenham uses a range of strategies to prevent and deal with incidents of bullying.

### 5.1. The ethos promoted by the school

This sets a climate in which bullying behaviour is seen as unacceptable and there is an emphasis on respect for others. Sydenham adheres to the United Nation Convention of the Rights of the Child and all our policies are underpinned by our commitment to the Rights of Children. We aim to prevent bullying by:

- Fostering a whole school ethos of good behaviour, mutual respect, and consideration. We aim to create a safe, happy, and inclusive environment for learning, and encourage students to value diversity and difference, protect the vulnerable, and appreciate how their actions might affect others.
- Developing a culture in which diversity is championed and celebrated and in which the school takes a proactive role in educating students and other members of the school community in issues around equality.
- Developing a culture in which the vulnerable are protected and incidents which might demonstrate prejudice or intolerance are tackled and addressed, for example by challenging inappropriate or prejudicial language.
- Encouraging all members of the school community to have high expectations and model how to behave towards each other, making it clear to all that there are effective procedures for reporting, investigating and tackling bullying.
- Utilising Restorative Justice techniques to support students with disrupted relationships.
- Raising awareness about bullying through opportunities in the pastoral curriculum, the PSHE programme, assemblies, and national events such as Anti Bullying Week.
- Educating students and other members of the school community about how to keep themselves safe when online or using social media or other electronic means of communication, so they take maximum precautions to help prevent themselves being victims of cyberbullying.
- Making it clear to all that incidents of cyberbullying or bullying of any kind that occur off the school premises but have an impact on the classroom environment or relationships between students will be pursued with the same seriousness as bullying occurring within school.

- Developing students' social skills, confidence, resilience and self-esteem; and defining the value of assertiveness in relationships as opposed to aggression, whether direct or indirect.
- Ensuring that the IT filtering and monitoring systems are effective in protecting members of the school community.
- Working in line with national guidance, and the requirements of our regulatory bodies.

## 5.2. The curriculum

- Ensuring all students sign the school's Home School Agreements, which make it clear that cyberbullying is unacceptable. This message is regularly reinforced in lessons and pastoral sessions.
- Sydenham School also provides detailed information on how to deal with cyberbullying available to students and parents and runs parents' information sessions on e-safety.
- Work on bullying is delivered through our pastoral curriculum which also addresses issues of difference and belonging.
- There are also regular assemblies supporting students to understand what bullying is and how to deal with it.
- Some of the other curriculum areas which address bullying directly are PSE, English and Drama.

## 5.3. Partnership with Parents

We believe that working with parents/carers is essential to establishing the school's anti-bullying ethos and resolving any issues that arise and parents are:

- Encouraged to reinforce the principles of the Anti-Bullying Policy at home
- Encourage their children to say if bullying is happening
- Asked to contact the school directly if they have cause for concern, either on behalf of their own children or because of rumours about others

In any serious case of bullying parents will be informed by the school and may be invited in to discuss the matter. We will keep in regular contact with parents until the issue is resolved.

## 5.4. Support

Sydenham School has a strong pastoral team dedicated to student welfare and experienced in dealing with bullying issues. All our staff are trained in recognising and responding to bullying and staff awareness is raised through regular discussion of student issues in staff meetings. Action is taken to reduce the risk of bullying where and when it is known to be most likely to occur. Students in Year 7 to 11 have access to a Pastoral Manager linked to their year group to discuss any issues they may have, as well as being able to talk to their tutor or Head of Year.

Sydenham School constantly seeks ways of developing and promoting student responsibility. We have a Prefect system so they can support younger students in managing difficulties. We also run circle time sessions in tutor time to allow students to discuss a range of issues confidentially with their peers and tutor.

We also take students' views into account through the School Council, and developing the roles that students can play in anti-bullying work. This policy incorporates the views of students.

## 5.5. Staff

### Teachers

- Challenge unpleasant comments in and out of class
- Do not always allow choice when creating group/pair situations so that students do not feel isolated or left out
- Are aware of isolated or unhappy students around the school
- Model impeccable behaviour and lead by example
- Treat students and colleagues with respect

### Non-teaching Staff

- Be pleasant and approachable – “firm but fair”.
- Treat students and colleagues with respect
- Kitchen staff should report incidents in the dining areas to duty staff

## 5.6. Dealing with identified instigators

When a student is identified and found to have engaged in bullying behaviour, action is taken. The sanctions implemented correspond to the disciplinary guidelines laid down in the whole school good behaviour policy. However, the school also recognises that in some cases extra support and counselling may need to be given to both the victims and the instigators and endeavours to provide this where a need is identified. It is vital that any student who is being bullied, feels sufficiently confident and empowered to report the incident. Students must know how they can do this, who they should talk to and also feel safe that any report made will be taken seriously and that they will be listened to and the report investigated.

It is vital that parents and carers of students who feel they are being bullied should know that their concerns will be listened to and acted upon. Every case must be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated. This is an important safeguarding issue for students and all staff must know that action must be taken within the context of the “the safety of the child is paramount”. We therefore take the allegations just as seriously as allegations of abuse.

## 5.7. Monitoring and evaluation

The effectiveness of this policy and the school’s anti bullying strategies will be evaluated annually through a review of the bullying log and consultation with the school council. Parent and carer views will also be regularly sought. A review of the policy will incorporate the views of parents/carers and students.

This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body in accordance with the Policy Schedule.

## 5.8. Key Contacts

- SLT member with lead responsibility for year group
- Deputy Head (for Key Stage)
- Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Head of Year

- Pastoral Manager (for year group)

## 6. From policy to practice

Staff should deal with any incident following the guidelines below.

### 6.1. The incident / report of bullying

**6.1.a.** Students may report incidents of bullying to any member of staff or to an older student. The Inclusion team also run break and lunch clubs which provide a supportive, informal setting for students to raise concerns. Parents may all raise concerns regarding bullying to any member of staff by phone or email.

**6.1.b.** Incidents of bullying must be taken seriously. If a student reports an incident it is important to act quickly but objectively.

**6.1.c.** It is the policy of the school in cases of any sort of unacceptable or inappropriate behaviour that statements are taken. The same procedure is undertaken in cases of bullying. Students affected by bullying, accused of bullying or witness to the bullying should complete an Incident Report form. The teacher investigating should then discuss these with their line manager to ascertain whether bullying has taken place and if so, who is being bullied and by whom.

**6.1.d.** Further action will be dependent upon the nature and seriousness of the bullying. It is vital that any incidents are investigated thoroughly and that action is not initiated until it is certain that a full picture of the incident has been achieved.

**6.1.e.** Parents/Carers of the victim should be contacted as soon as possible after the report is received, told that the incident is being investigated and kept informed throughout.

### 6.2. Reassurance of the victim

**6.2.a.** The victim of any bullying behaviour must be reassured and made to feel safe, in some cases this will mean a referral to the Inclusion team for immediate support. Students who are being bullied often feel that things will be made worse if they report what is happening. It is therefore vital that all students who go to a member of staff feel that they will be helped, taken seriously and feel confident to explain exactly what has been happening to them.

### 6.3. Help / support for the victim

**6.3.a.** The help and support for the victim will depend on the nature of the bullying incident and the student involved. Types of support might include:

- Organising a circle of friends for a student isolated within their tutor group

- Encouraging and supporting the student to find out about and attend lunchtime clubs and activities
- Referral to social skills/self-esteem intervention
- Organising and facilitating a restorative meeting

**6.3.b.** If bullying has been long term or severe, it is important to recognise that for some, a greater degree of support may be needed. Students may also be referred for support to outside agencies or to counselling provision.

**6.3.c.** It must always be emphasised to a victim that should any further incident occur, that they report it immediately

## 6.4. Dealing with the instigator

6.4.a. It is important that any student accused of bullying is dealt with fairly and objectively. A statement will therefore be obtained from them and their view of events listened to.

6.4.b. If it is felt a student behaved in a way that was bullying it is important to stress that this is unacceptable behaviour and explain the impact on the victim.

6.4.c. It may be felt that the instigator should be sanctioned. If so, this should be done cautiously, clearly outlining why it is felt a sanction is needed and what it should be. Staff should follow the guidelines in the Behaviour Policy, and in serious cases, the Headteacher may consider an internal, fixed-term or permanent exclusion, in line with the school's Behaviour Policy.

6.4.d. It should be remembered, that often a student who bullies has significant problems and needs help and support. Referral to other staff and agencies may therefore be necessary.

6.4.e. Following investigation into a serious incident the instigator will be required to sign an Anti-Bullying contract which will be placed on her school file.

6.4.f. If the bullying behaviour has occurred before and the Anti-Bullying contract has not been adhered to, then the consequences will be decided by the Senior Leadership Team but are likely to be serious.

## 6.5. Recording and Involvement of other staff

6.5.a. When an incident of bullying has occurred, it must be recorded on CPOMS. Accurate recording will enable the Head of Year to monitor incidents of bullying in their year group and for the Senior Leadership Team to monitor the extent of bullying across the school and evaluate the effectiveness of the school's Anti-Bullying policy.

6.5.b. The Form Tutors of both the victim and the instigator should be informed by email and where incidents involve students from different year groups the Head of Years and /or relevant Leadership Team staff will need to be kept informed and work together to resolve the issue.

6.5.c. Complex incidents should always be discussed and where appropriate involve other staff. If there is any uncertainty on how to proceed, the appropriate line manager should be consulted. This is particularly so where very serious incidents have been uncovered or if a student is being persistently bullied.

## 6.6. Contact with home

6.6.a. Contact with home should always be made where an incident has occurred – both with the parents/carers of the victim and the instigator, even if the investigation is inconclusive.

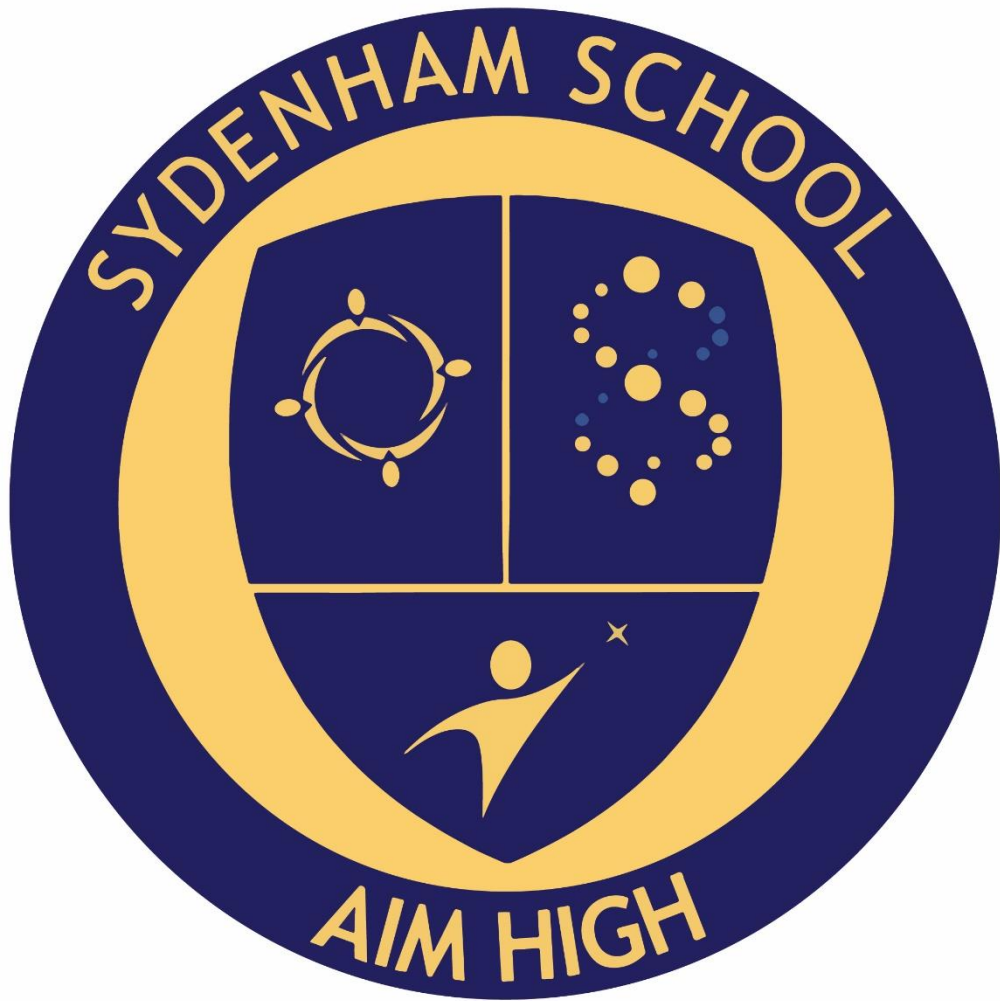
6.6.b. All letters home dealing with serious issues of bullying should be written by the Head of Year and checked by the Senior Management Line Manager.

6.6.c. Formal warnings and Anti-Bullying contracts should be drawn up by Head of Year but issued by AHT/DHT.

## 6.7. Advice to parents

6.7.a. It is important that the school communicates to parents its' position regarding bullying. Parents should know that the school has an Anti-Bullying Policy and where to find it on the school website.

6.7.b. Guidance should be given to parents on what action to take if an incident of bullying occurs. A parents' guide to bullying is given to all new parents.



# Anti-Bullying Policy Parents' Guide

## **Anti-Bullying Policy: Parents Guide**

At Sydenham School we want young people to live, learn, socialise and work in an inclusive school, where they value each other's differences, support one another, treat each other with respect, empathy and compassion and refrain from bullying others. We strongly believe in empowering students and providing guidance and intervention to ensure their safety. We are a Telling School.

### **Our Definition of Bullying**

Bullying is the repeated intentional (physical or emotional) hurting of one person or group by another, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Cyber bullying can be defined as the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else.

### **The Ethos Promoted by the School**

1. To reduce and deal effectively with bullying
2. To support students' ability to deal with bullying and to strengthen their emotional resilience
3. To develop and strengthen our capacity to address bullying

Sydenham School is a place where young people and adults:

- respect themselves and others
- value their relationships with others
- take responsibility for their actions
- have the skills and support to put things right when they go wrong

These key values and skills help to develop cultures where bullying is unacceptable.

We have preventative anti-bullying approaches and clear strategies for intervention.

### **Developing Emotional Literacy through the Curriculum**

Our holistic and inclusive approach to diversity encourages students to develop a sense of belonging and commitment to the school community which aims to reduce the extent to which bullying takes place. Awareness is raised across the curriculum and specifically in PSHE, Drama, English, tutor activities, assemblies, 'Anti-bullying week' and the use of Restorative Approaches to resolve issues of conflict.

### **Emotional Support and Building Resilience**

Victims, perpetrators and bystanders may all need emotional support, this can help students contextualise and explore the options available to them, and to identify strategies for dealing with the effects of being involved. The support enables them to express their thoughts and feelings about how the bullying has affected them.

### **Dealing with Incidents of Bullying**

All incidents of bullying are investigated and appropriate action taken. This sometimes includes a sanction, but we mainly use 'restorative approaches' to heal any harm created by an incident. This provides a framework for making any sanctions more meaningful as everyone is involved in the decision-making process.

## **Restorative interventions are based on a series of questions:**

- What has happened?
- What were you thinking/feeling at the time?
- Has anything happened before/since?
- What have you been thinking and feeling since?
- Who else has been affected?
- What do you need?

These questions can be used by anyone to promote meaningful conversations about very minor incidents that may occur regularly. All staff use this approach to resolve conflict.

## **What should you do if your child reports that they are being bullied?**

### **What to Do if Your Child Reports Bullying**

#### **1. Talk to Your Child**

- First, determine whether this is bullying or a disagreement/falling out between friends. Try to find out:
  - The name of the person involved
  - Where and when the incident(s) occurred
  - What exactly happened

#### **2. Contact a Member of Staff**

- Encourage your child to talk to their form tutor about the bullying.
- If needed, you can also contact the Form Tutor, Pastoral Manager, or Head of Year (HoY) to explain the situation.

#### **3. Reassure Your Child**

- Explain that Sydenham School has zero tolerance for bullying, and we will work with you and your child to stop it.
- Encourage your child to seek help immediately if anything else happens.
- For cyberbullying or unpleasant online communications:
  - Save or screenshot the messages.
  - Discuss them with your child.
  - Share them with the Tutor, HoY, or Pastoral Manager if needed.
- Help your child plan what to do at school the next day:
  - Who to tell and how to tell their story (consider writing it down).
  - It may be best to avoid interacting with the other pupil.
- Ensure your child feels safe until the issue is resolved, for example:
  - Travelling to and from school with a friend
  - Spending breaks and lunch with friends away from the instigator
  - Going to their HoY for support

#### **4. Ongoing Prevention**

- Regularly talk with your child about their friendships, both online and offline.
- Let your child know you may monitor their online accounts from time to time for their safety.

Linked Policies:

- [Behaviour](#)
- [Safeguarding and Child Protection](#)
- [Equality Information and Objectives](#)
- [E-Safety](#)
- [SEND](#)
- [RSE](#)