

The aim of The Grey Coat Hospital is to enable girls to take charge of their learning, make decisions based on Christian values, live in the world as independent women and meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

ANTI - BULLYING POLICY

At The Grey Coat Hospital we believe that all students have a right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied. We promote good behaviour. It is made clear that bullying is a form of anti-social behaviour. It is wrong and will not be tolerated.

We believe that all learners are of equal worth and should be enabled to achieve their full potential. We recognise that in order to achieve this, students have the right to be educated in an environment where they feel valued, respected and safe. Bullying deprives students of this right and denies access to the full curriculum.

Aims

- The aim of our anti-bullying policy is to clarify for students and staff that bullying is always unacceptable.
- We wish to encourage an environment where independence is celebrated, and individuals can flourish without fear.
- It is important that we create an atmosphere in the school where students 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 and sensitive to their concerns
- We will ensure that we support and guide the perpetrators of bullying, so that they understand the implications of their actions
- Every student has the right to be safe and happy in school, and to be protected when she is feeling vulnerable.
- We will ensure that parents are encouraged to discuss their concerns with staff
- We will ensure that staff feel supported in dealing promptly and effectively with incidents of bullying that are disclosed to them by students and/or their parents/carers.
- We will ensure all adults feel safe in discussing bullying from other adults within the school community, and action is taken to deal with this.

What is bullying?

Bullying is behaviour which makes other people feel uncomfortable or threatened, whether this is intended or not. Bullying can be described as being a deliberate act done to cause distress solely in order to give a feeling of power, status or other gratification to the bully. It is regular and ongoing

There are different sorts of bullying, it can be any of the following.

PHYSICAL

Hitting, kicking, or spitting at others.

VERBAL

Name calling, teasing, insulting, writing unkind notes, it may be directed towards gender, ethnic origin, physical/social disability, personality, appearance and it includes homophobic remarks.

EMOTIONAL

Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, spreading rumours or giving 'looks'.

DAMAGE TO PROPERTY OR THEFT

It may include taking or hiding belongings, including money, or intimidating students to hand over their property.

CYBER-BULLYING

When a student sends hurtful or cruel text or images to another using Internet, mobile phones or other digital communication devices.

Possible signs

People react differently. It is not always possible to tell if someone is hurt or upset. Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness or clinging to adults. They may show changes in their work patterns, may lack concentration or may even truant from school.

Procedures

In the first instance, it is important to make it clear to the victim that revenge is not appropriate and to the bully that her behaviour is unacceptable, and has caused distress. Every effort is made to resolve the problem through dialogue with both parties.

At this stage, parents of both parties are informed of what has happened, and how it has been dealt with. It is vital that everything that happens is carefully recorded in a clear factual way. An email will **always** be sent to the HoY and Deputy Head for information and monitoring purposes. Sanctions will be decided by tutor, Head of Year or Deputy Head depending on the severity of the bullying. It is important that support is maintained for both parties, even when sanctions have been applied.

Advice to students

Strategies to deal with bullying will be discussed in tutor time, PHSCE time or when an incident occurs. Staff will reinforce the following strategies to students:

- If you are being bullied, or you know that someone else is, please tell us straight away, and it will be dealt with.
- Not telling means the victim will continue to suffer and the bully will carry on, probably with others too.
- We all have a responsibility to make sure that bullying is not allowed to continue in our school.
- Be proud of who you are; it is good to be individual.
- Try not to show you are upset. It is hard, but a bully thrives on someone's fear.
- Stay with a group of friends. There is safety in numbers.
- Be assertive – shout 'No!' Walk confidently away. Go straight to a teacher or member of staff.
- Fighting back makes things worse – don't do it.
- It is best to tell an adult you trust straight away. You will get immediate support. You can also talk to peer counsellors who can give you good advice and direct you to an appropriate adult.
- Teachers will take you seriously and will deal with the bullies in a way which will end the bullying and will not make things worse for you.
- Tell your parents or somebody you can trust.

Advice to parents

If you feel your child is being bullied

- Make a note of what your child says, particularly who was said to be involved; how often the bullying has occurred; where it happened and what happened.
- Let us know straight away
- Reassure her that we will deal with it sensitively but firmly.

What school will do;

- If your daughter tells us she is being bullied, or we discover that she is bullying others, we will contact you, and will discuss together how the situation can be improved.
- We will contact you as the situation is resolved.

If you feel your child is bullying

- Try to find out why your child is bullying.
- Be aware of your daughter's use of MSN and other internet sites, you may want to block some of these at home.
- Show your child ways to deal with difficult situations without having to resort to bullying others.
- Focus on the bullying being what **they do**, not who they are.
- Discuss with your daughter's Head of Year how you can work with the school.
- Help your child to feel good about themselves.

If you feel you need more support

- Check with the school's anti bullying policy to see if agreed procedures are being followed.
- Make an appointment to discuss the matter with the Headteacher; keep a record of the meeting.
- You can then follow the school and LEA complaints procedure if you feel the matter has not been dealt with correctly.

Advice to teachers

The following is a list of actions available to staff depending on the perceived seriousness of the situation. The emphasis is always on a caring, listening approach as bullies are often victims too – that may be why they bully.

If bullying is reported or suspected follow the guidelines below.

- Talk to the girls concerned and ask them what has been happening.
- Either ask them to write it down, or do so yourself, so that it can be passed on to the tutor or Head of Year.
- Incidents of bullying will always be recorded on an email and sent to the Head of Year and Deputy Head
- If the bully owns up then sanctions will follow, decided upon in discussion with the tutor and Head of Year.
- In serious cases this may lead to an internal exclusion or a fixed term exclusion decided upon by the Deputy Head and Headteacher.
- If the suspected bully does not own up, then the matter will be passed to the Head of Year and Deputy Head to investigate further.
- Attempts will be made to help the bully or bullies change their behaviour. Where necessary other professionals will be asked to work with the class, group or the individuals.
- Teachers will discuss bullying issues regularly as part of the PHSE and Citizenship curriculum. Curriculum work can enhance this policy in two ways:
 - By dealing with the topic of bullying, in a way which explores why it happens and gives alternative ways of behaving, and dealing with difficulties.
 - By using teaching methods which encourage co-operative work and a variety of groupings so that students extend their relationships beyond a small group of friends.
- We need to be particularly vigilant at breaks and travelling times, around corridors between lessons and in the area of the playground and the toilets. These are times and places where victims are more vulnerable and bullying is not easily seen.

Responding to parents/carers

When parents/carers contact the school about bullying they need to know their concerns are being heard and to feel reassured that these will be taken seriously. We recognise that parents will be feeling very worried, and we will work with them to think through what has happened and to agree what may be done to resolve the situation promptly and effectively.

Record, monitor and evaluate

We will record incidents of bullying, and we will monitor and evaluate our bullying prevention strategies.

This will include the following:

- Conducting student surveys and focus group research on a regular basis.
- Conducting parent surveys, annually after parents' evenings.
- Ensuring bullying issues are on the school agenda e.g. through assemblies, theme of the year, school council and the curriculum.
- Using the students' Homework Diaries to offer information about procedures and advice to students.
- Checking the effectiveness of the incident reporting system.

This policy was written in June 2007

Next reviewed June 2009