

Policy: Anti-Bullying Policy



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PRINCIPLES

In every school/college bullying is a reality for some students. At Sidmouth College we are committed to preventing bullying.

Bullying may take the form of words, actions, expressions or attitudes. It can involve direct contact between persons or indirect contact, e.g. via text-messaging, or online via social media, email and the internet.

At Sidmouth College we want to encourage openness about bullying. Students must feel that all staff take bullying seriously and that they will act to stop it. We hold a weekly open forum with student Anti-bullying Ambassadors where students are encouraged to share and support each other. We encourage students to support each other by informing staff if their friends are bullied. The Staff and Governors of the College will not tolerate the disruption of a student's education and well-being by the behaviour of another student or students.

The knowledge that bullying of any kind will not be tolerated is conveyed via assemblies and the tutorial programme throughout the year. It is essential that the bully and the victim understand that further bullying, or any repercussions from staff intervention, will not be tolerated.

DEFINITIONS OF BULLYING

There are many definitions of bullying, but most consider it to be:

- deliberately hurtful (including aggression)
- repeated often over a period of time

Bullying can take many forms, but four main types are:

- physical (hitting, kicking)
- verbal (name calling, insulting, making offensive remarks)
- Indirect (spreading nasty stories about someone either orally, in writing or electronically, exclusion from social groups, being made the subject of malicious rumours, taking belongings etc.)
- Cyber bullying.

Name-calling is the most common direct form. This may be because of individual characteristics, ethnic origin, nationality or colour; sexual orientation, or some form of disability or perceptions of these issues.

BULLYING OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

Clearly bullying is not merely confined to College and may take place in situations outside the College's control. As members of the community we all have a responsibility to work to prevent bullying and to take action if we see it occurring.

If parents or students are concerned about bullying outside the College we would ask them to do the following:

Notify the College of your concerns. Incidents outside College can often spill over into school time and we would appreciate any information that may help us. We will investigate issues that are reported to the College and act upon them. If the behaviour could be considered criminal or poses a serious threat to members of the public the Police will be informed. We may be unable to act but we can offer advice and support. The College also has the power to discipline students for misbehaving outside of the College premises "to such an extent that is reasonable".

Contact the relevant authorities outside College if you feel the situation merits it.

(Further advice can be found in Appendix 1: Advice to Parents)

School Buses

School buses can be places where bullying occurs. The College has a clear expectation that students behave responsibly and considerately on the buses and bullying will not be tolerated. Devon Transport requires all students using the buses to sign the behaviour code agreement and the College will assist Devon Transport in enforcing this.

If students or parents are concerned that bullying is occurring they can speak to the Head of House at the College.

Staff monitor the loading and disembarkation of buses each morning and afternoon. If students or parents have concerns about bullying they can speak to staff at these points.

Any concerns about bullying on the buses can be reported to reception by any parent or student and will be passed to the appropriate member of staff and/or Devon Transport.

Students or parents may also contact the Head of House if they have any concerns regarding bullying or behaviour on the buses, or contact Devon Transport directly.

DEALING WITH BULLYING - PREVENTION STRATEGIES AND SUPPORT

The College works throughout the year with a planned programme to raise the profile of differences and tolerance within our community to create an ethos which is safe, secure and positive towards each other. The PSHE curriculum and within subjects supports this positive College climate and includes topics such as; self-esteem, self-awareness, tolerance, empathy, diversity, working with others

Students who have been bullied should be supported by:

- being offered an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a mentor/adult, counsellor or other member of staff
- reassurance

- continued monitoring of the situation for at least 4 weeks
- guidance on how to prevent and manage situations

Students who have bullied should be helped to cease behaviour of this kind by:

- Engaging in Restorative Approaches fully to discuss what happened and the effects on others
- discover why the student became involved
- establishing the wrong doing and need to change
- informing parents to help change the attitude of the student
- being offered support to deal with the inappropriate behaviour
- understanding the consequences of continued bullying
- referral to anger management/counseling

The College will raise the awareness of the nature of bullying through PSHE, mentoring times, assemblies and subject areas, as appropriate, in an attempt to ensure awareness of the College's Anti-Bullying Policy and to attempt to fulfill the aims outlined in this document.

PROCEDURES:

It is important to recognise that whilst there is no single way to deal with bullying, each instance must be dealt with robustly, promptly and effectively. As a general rule the following procedures should be followed:

Staff should:

- Log the behaviour as 'Deliberately Hurtful' in the first instance recording the victim's name in the behaviour log and the aggressor within SIMS. This enables a consistency of approach and ensures that no concerns go unmissed.
- Assure the student that their concerns will be dealt with seriously. If time cannot be found immediately, make an appointment to see the student later on the same day.
- Establish the facts and identity of the bully (bullies).
- Interview both the bullied and the bully at appropriate and convenient time.
- Keep a written record of the incident, share information as appropriate with colleagues and ensure a copy of the written record is passed to the Student Support Team and Inclusion Manager or Head of House.

Ensure that appropriate action is taken as a result of the incident. This may include:

- An apology, either written or verbal.
- A Restorative meeting between the bullied and bully.
- Appropriate sanction within the College's disciplinary procedure and/or providing mentor support.
- Informing parents/carers of the incident.
- Inform Tutor/Head of Year
- In appropriate cases, the matter should immediately be brought to the attention of a Senior Staff member.
- Incidents of "racial abuse" are reported to the appropriate "anti-discriminatory" organisation" and forms will be completed.

Students should either:

- Tell a member of staff if you are being bullied, or if you know someone else is, *or*

- Use the online reporting mechanisms on the College website 'Whisper' – see below



- Students should be safe in the knowledge that we are a 'telling school'.

Parents should:

- Inform Student Support, the Tutor or Head of House if they suspect bullying may be occurring.
- Reassure your child that the College will deal with the issue sensitively but firmly.
- Work with the College towards resolving the difficulties which exist.

Staff Procedures and responsibilities

Staff have guidelines for action on bullying so that the College deals consistently with incidents:

- Bullying within a tutor or subject group on a very minor level might be dealt with by individual staff via tutorial or discussion. It must be recorded as a 'Behaviour Log – Deliberately Hurtful'. It must name the victim as a concern log and the aggressor to enable monitoring of the situation.
- Purple statement forms are used with victim feedback to ensure that they feel safe and supported with their specific concerns/situation.
- More serious bullying incidents, or repetitive bullying behaviour, must be reported to Heads of House.
- Head of House will make an initial assessment of the incident to decide if a Restorative Approach is suitable. This may entail the Head of House interviewing all students involved or, if appropriate, them passing the case onto another member of staff, e.g. the HLTA or Inclusion Manager, to do so. Details of interviews are kept and filed for future reference. A record of the incident will be stored centrally on SIMS.net. According to the severity of the incident appropriate action to ensure the safety of everyone will be put in place.
- Where appropriate a restorative conference will be held. This would be organised by the HLTA responsible for Behaviour/Guidance/Support and Learning or the Head of House and Inclusion Manager. Personal Tutors and other staff will be informed of the outcomes of the restorative conference as appropriate. Parents may be informed if appropriate.
- A child who is being bullied may need strategies to build self-esteem and confidence. Head of House may refer students to College counsellors. Equally, the bully may need help with behaviour modification and may be referred to the Educational Psychologist.
- In the event of a major incident, such as serious physical violence, students should be sent immediately to a member of the Leadership Team who will liaise with the appropriate Head of House.
- Behaviour logs are analysed twice weekly by members of the Leadership Team and Heads of House to ensure that any repeated 'Deliberately hurtful' behaviour logs are dealt with as bullying if involving the same students.
- Serious incidents, both one-off incidents or repetitive incidents, may lead to internal exclusion, fixed-term or permanent exclusions and would normally involve the student being seen by Governors. Police will be involved when necessary.

CONSEQUENCES.

Appropriate responses should be carried out in line with the College's Behaviour Policy and Procedures. Students are expected to record their perspective of a bullying incident report and a restorative session will be undertaken if appropriate.

Depending on circumstances consequences might include:

- official warning to cease offending
- removal from the group (in class)
- withdrawal of break and/or lunchtime privileges
- detention
- parent meeting with Senior staff
- internal exclusion
- withholding participation in any College trip or sports events that are not an essential part of the curriculum
- fixed period exclusion
- Use of Police Community Support Officers and the Police

Where the situation is deemed to be serious the Principal retains the right to permanently exclude a student where the needs of the student and/or community may only be served by such a course of action.

Criminal Law

If College staff feel that an offense may have been committed we will seek assistance from the police e.g. 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.

MONITORING

All instances of bullying are recorded in College. Monitoring will be carried out termly by the Vice Principal and the Heads of House using the data gathered.

EVALUATION

This should be undertaken by:

Using data from monitoring and feedback from staff, parents, students and governors the policy will be reviewed and updated bi-annually.

Evaluation to be coordinated by the Vice Principal and a report prepared annually for the Governors.

OTHER POLICIES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Behaviour Policy and Procedures, its Equal Opportunities Policy, and its Race Equality Policy.

The College, when drafting this policy, is mindful of The Human Rights Act (1998) and the Equality Act 2010 and the Children Act 1989

Appendix 1

Bullying - Advice to Students

- Tell someone early and nip it in the bud, prevention is better than cure.
- Don't become a bystander – do not tolerate poor behavior to other students inform an adult immediately – this includes discriminatory and derogatory language to others and homophobic language.
- Tell someone else: support a friend in need.
- Seek advice from Student Support
- Contact the college anonymously via the College website button for anyone worried about bullying.
- Don't leave your personal belongings unattended; this can often lead to problems.
- Stick with your friends, this makes bullying more difficult. Stay away from places where you know trouble can happen.
- If you suffer problems on a school bus where you can't get away, seek help from older students and report it to Student Support. If that doesn't work, speak to your Tutor who may decide to alert your Head of House or a Vice Principal to the problem.
- Trust those people who deal with bullying: they will offer immediate support.
- Don't believe the College doesn't listen as every case reported by students and staff is investigated, recorded and dealt with fully.

Bullying - Advice to Parents

- If you suspect your child is being bullied, ask him / her.
- Recognise that it often takes courage for a child to admit they are being bullied. They will almost always have tried already to deal with the problems themselves.
- Listen carefully to him / her and find out what's going on.
- Take what he / she tells you seriously.
- Contact Student Support at the College. They will then speak to the appropriate member of staff.
- Work with the College to solve the problem: we cannot succeed if we work independently.
- Help your child develop strategies to avoid situations where bullying may occur
- Don't hope it will go away, the sooner you act and contact the College, the sooner the problem can be addressed.
- We cannot do anything about something we don't know. Please contact us.

Bullying - Advice to Staff

- Take any report of bullying seriously.
- Be prompt to class, and prompt to duty. Bullying usually occurs during unsupervised time.
- Don't leave your class unless it's an emergency.
- Always be on the look-out for behaviour which points to bullying, e.g. unexpected silence, that look, bags out of place, students where they 'shouldn't be', torn/spoiled clothing, whispering, tripping / kicking, poor attendance etc.
- Do not tolerate poor choice of language e.g. homophobic comments – challenge these in every circumstance
- Promptly log 'deliberately hurtful' behaviour identifying the victim name and aggressor in all circumstances.

- Report all incidents of bullying to Student Support and your Head of House or the SLT