SUTTON VALENCE SCHOOL
SINCE 1576

Anti Bullying Policy

(Senior School)

Author: Mr James Thomas
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This policy addresses The Independent Schools Standards Regulations February 2016, Part 3, para 9 and 10, and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (Sept 2022).

This policy follows non-statutory DFE advice on:

Preventing and tackling bullying: Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies (DfE, July 2017);
Cyberbullying: advice for headteachers and school staff (DfE, November 2014);
Advice and guidance: How can we stop prejudice-based bullying in schools (Equality and Human Rights Commission);
The Prevent Duty (April 2019)
Searching, screening and confiscation: advice for schools (DfE, July 2022)

It should also be read in conjunction with:

'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (KCSIE) 2024 following on from the 2023 version with its welcome emphasis on the need to tackle child on child abuse in its various forms.
The updated guidance as to how to deal with *Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges* (Sept 2021)
'Working together to Safeguard Children' (2018)

The following Sutton Valence School Policies:

The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
The Positive Behaviour Policy and other relevant protocols SVS
The Complaints Procedure
The ICT Policy SVS
The Electronic Communication Policy SVS

This policy is based on the principle that everyone in our community has the right to be able to come to school happily and confidently to achieve success in all areas of school life, without feeling intimidated in any way by the actions of others. The SMT work hard to ensure that an effective anti-bullying strategy is in place which actively prevents and minimises bullying at the school. When instances of bullying are brought to the school's attention, they are dealt with promptly. Staff help children to overcome the impact of bullying. All staff are trained to recognise and deal with bullying. Consequently, treating each other with respect is emphasized in the Pupil contract that pupils sign at the start of each academic year and is also set out in our School Values:

School Values

Sutton Valence is an educational community whose philosophy embraces a breadth of challenges. Through a diverse curriculum and a wide range of activities we cultivate an appreciation of academic excellence, responsibility, leadership, kindness and friendship amongst our pupils. All members of the School develop a sense of spiritual, moral and ethical awareness and, in so doing, come to appreciate their own place in the world.

At Sutton Valence every person is valued as an individual with their own distinct sense of worth and potential. Each member of the community has abilities, talents and skills unique to them. Our School strives to provide the seedbed to allow these gifts and talents to grow, develop and ultimately flourish. The recently formed TIDE (Team for Inclusion, Diversity and Equality) will play a key role in continuing to help enhance the School community's understanding of the role they can play as individuals in creating a suitably welcoming environment.

Our community is founded on the principles of trust, tolerance and openness. As such, we expect all at Sutton Valence to treat each other with respect, humanity and care. Individuals therefore are obliged to recognise that the differences between us make us collectively stronger. It is essential that we understand, appreciate and celebrate the diversity of backgrounds, world-views and attitudes expressed by those in our community.

At the foundation of our community is the expectation that every pupil will achieve their potential. Our commitment is to strive for excellence as pupils and teachers. To achieve this, it is essential that every member of the School strives to give of their very best in all that they do.

Consequently, bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable and we accept that it can cause significant damage to a victim's ability to thrive physically, emotionally, psychologically and socially.

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or a group that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally and may cause psychological damage. It is usually unprovoked, uses malicious actions or words and is delivered directly or via other media. It is often repeated over a period of time, so that it not only causes distress at the time, but the threat of future attacks also causes anxiety and fear. Its aim is to cause unhappiness, making others feel insecure, isolated and unwanted.

This policy accepts that bullying can take many forms and use different means. In identifying its occurrence, the School has for a long time firmly rejected the idea that deliberate unpleasantness can be excused by describing such behavior as banter.

- Different forms of bullying include racial, religious, cultural, sexual/sexist, homophobic or gender orientation or identity, special educational needs and disability, because a child is adopted or a carer, or bullying based on physical difference;
- Different means of bullying include physical (including sexual); verbal (spoken and written, via any means); emotional bullying (including exclusion, use of silence, forming of cliques, spreading of rumours); extortion bullying (demanding money or possessions from another or taking or damaging belongings); cyber-bullying (including via texting, social networking sites, mobile phones, digital media, email, camera enabled devices, image sharing sites);
- It can involve manipulating a third party to torment or tease someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation;
- Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time and can involve everyone - pupils in our School, other young people from outside our community, staff and parents. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidating;
- Bullying can also take place outside school, using mobile, internet and wireless technologies.

A bullying incident will be treated as a Safeguarding or Child Protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a pupil is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.

Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behavior. For instance:

- The Protection from Harassment Act (1997);
- The Malicious Communications Act (1988);
- The Communications Act (2003);
- The Public Order Act (1986).

Under the Malicious Communications Act (1988), it is an offence to send someone an electronic communication with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send electronic communications which are indecent or grossly offensive, a threat or information which is known to be false.

Where bullying has criminal intent, such as assault, theft, hate crime, discrimination and victimisation as well as repeated harassment or intimidation, it may trigger a threshold referral to Social Services or if it is deemed necessary the Police will be informed.

Records are kept to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach adopted or to enable patterns to be identified. This analysis is shared with the School's Safeguarding Governors.

By regular Safeguarding training, members of staff are made aware of the threshold for reporting any instances of bullying to external agencies but are expected to refer to the DSL in the first instance. It will also continue to be a key focus of our PSHE/Pathways programme and the continued development of our various mentoring schemes.

Sutton Valence School condemns the notion of initiation rituals or ceremonies intended to cause pain, anxiety or humiliation.

In the prevention and identification of bullying, the School aims to:

- Prevent bullying and actively work to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils**;**
- Prevent, de-escalate and/or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour;
- React to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way;
- Ensure both staff and pupils are aware of the seriousness of bullying and the consequences of ignoring it;
- Train all staff to identify bullying and to follow School policy and procedures on bullying;
- Provide opportunities to develop pupils' social and emotional skills, including their resilience. This includes targeted input during PSHE sessions and tutor time, through assemblies, news items, charitable drives, use of case studies or projects in English and Drama for instance;
- Consider all opportunities for addressing bullying including through the curriculum, through displays, through peer support and through the modelling of behaviour;
- Advise pupils never to reply to unpleasant electronic communications, but to keep them as evidence;
- Distinguish between *'banter'* and bullying behaviour. This can be misunderstood by pupils on both the giving and receiving end, and resolving this is a matter of education in advance, rather than punishment afterwards;
- Educate about positive behaviour; the prevention of bullying is preferable to disciplinary actions;
- Inform pupils it is illegal to join social networking sites such as Facebook under the age of 13;
- Make sure that pupils are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying when they find themselves as bystanders;
- Canvas pupils' views on the extent and nature of bullying;
- Publicise details of support helplines and websites;
- Use the specialised skills of outside services and visiting speakers to help address key issues for pupils and to help staff understand the needs of their charges.

Procedures to follow in the event of bullying

Pupils are encouraged not to ignore comments or actions that upset them or make them feel uncomfortable. When another person says or does something which another feels is harassing they are encouraged to say one of these two key phrases to the person:

'I've had enough. I want you to stop doing that' or
'I've had enough. I want you to stop saying that'

Any pupil repeating such phrases, lets the person harassing them know that they regard the situation as one of harassment and that the incident will be reported. Pupils must report the incident immediately.

Electronic devices give unrestricted access to the internet and online safety is a part of our provision in support of the Safeguarding and Anti-Bullying Policies. The ICT Policy is understood and supported by staff, pupils and parents. The ultimate protection is in the good sense of the young people in the knowledge of what is available to them and the risk to which they might be subject.

This is particularly true with regards to the increasingly complex issue of the "Sharing of nude and semi-nude images". Our advice to anyone who receives messages encouraging them to share inappropriate images of themselves should be: 'No. Respect me.' They should then report the incident.

This is very much in line with our Anti-Bullying advice with the familiar key phrases as set out in the *Guidelines for School Life*.

Procedure when an allegation of bullying is reported:

- An allegation of bullying will result in an investigation most likely carried out by the Housemaster or Housemistress with oversight of a member of the Senior Management Team. Written notes will be kept;
- If an allegation is found to be justified, parents will be asked to attend a meeting with the key staff and following discussion, appropriate disciplinary responses will be served. These are as outlined in the '*Guidelines for Life at Sutton Valence School*', printed in the termly Calendar. The strength of the home school relationship can be pivotal in the bringing about of a resolution;
- Regard will be paid to the individual circumstances in each case, of both victim and perpetrator, including their age, their ability to understand the consequences of their actions and to change their behaviour, the possibility of a restorative relationship going forward and the future safety, security and welfare of all pupils concerned;
- The School will log the facts in confidential files and reports as appropriate;
- The child's Housemistress/ Housemaster, tutor and the DSLs may all be involved;
- Where appropriate, safeguarding arrangements will be put in place to ensure the child's welfare during an investigation and after the sanction have been served by the bully or bullies. The sensitive and considerate management of the relationship between the bullied and the bully or bullies will be of paramount importance;
- There are safe spaces for vulnerable children and young people. The duty rotas provide teacher cover for all areas at morning break and lunchtime. The brief is a roaming one within a defined area. In the event of teacher absence, the responsibility to arrange a swap lies with the teacher named on the list;
- Ongoing support for both the victim and the bully will be provided in terms of emotional and physical care. The School Chaplain, the School Counsellor and the School Nurse can become involved to give guidance and appropriate help. Work may be done in group or individual sessions;

- House staff will monitor behaviour and liaise to help us manage desired outcomes;
- Parental involvement will continue until a satisfactorily stable situation is achieved. The Housemaster or Housemistress, with a member of the Senior Management Team, will ascertain when this has been reached;
- If a criminal offence has been committed, appropriate referrals to the Police and Children's Social Care will be made;
- Bringing the School into disrepute or bullying on websites will result in sanctions, which could include suspension from School.

If your child is being bullied

As children often do not want to talk about being bullied, their parents will find it hard to find out exactly what is happening. Even when they do know what is going on, there are all sorts of difficulties in deciding the best way to cope with the problem. Parents themselves often feel confused and hurt. Sometimes they feel very angry and want to rush out and defend their child, and sometimes, especially if they have been bullied themselves, they think there is nothing they can do.

Here are some ideas and a few rules:

- Take time to listen carefully and sensitively to what your child is trying to say or might be afraid to say. They may be concerned you will make things worse by telling someone else or by complaining to the School. Assure your child that you will support them and stand by them, even if you can't promise to keep everything you are told a secret;
- Try to pinpoint exactly what is going on - who is involved, when and where it happens, and how often. You will not usually get all the information at once, and it is important not to 'grill' your child;
- If your child agrees, it can be helpful to write down a record of events. It can also be useful for parents in discussion with the School;
- Take what your child says seriously. Don't try to dismiss it as 'just part of growing up'. Show you have trust in your child. Believe them. Children should not have to put up with bullying. They should not be blamed when it happens to them, and you will not be blamed when you report it. The answer is usually not to be found in telling your child to 'get tough' or to retaliate. There are many more positive ways of helping your child. You will expect and receive a lot of help from the School.

Take prompt action by contacting the child's tutor and/or Housemaster or Housemistress. Don't let anyone tell you that you are fussing. Bullying rarely stops automatically; it is not easy to stop, especially when it has become a habit.

Children have usually taken some steps themselves to make things better, e.g. avoiding areas where they may have been bullied. Praise them for taking those steps, it will help build up self-respect and confidence. Children who are frightened about bullying need adults to act to make them safe.

The School adopts a zero tolerance approach to peer-on-peer abuse. The School strives to ensure that no victim is ever made to feel ashamed.

In the event of cyberbullying:

- Print off evidence from websites or ask the child to screenshot as much of the evidence as possible or retain evidence from mobiles etc;
- Parents should inform the School immediately if they become aware of any form of cyberbullying taking place between their child and another child in our community;
- Additionally, parents should contact the mobile network, their internet service provider or

their landline provider. Parents can invest in some parental control software to limit to whom their child can send messages or receive messages from. This software can also block access to some chat rooms.

For further comprehensive advice access:

1) The parents' section of the Teen Tips Hub;
2) 'Parent Info', a website developed by CEOP (the National Crime Agency's Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre);
3) Parent Zone

Speaking out:

- All our pupils are encouraged to tell a member of staff or a prefect at once if they know that bullying is taking place. The 'Concern' button on the pupil portal of the intranet is for the reporting of such an issue. It is anonymous, but a child may provide a mobile number if they want a text reply and we pledge not to attempt to trace any details. Relevant members of the SMT receive these concerns;
- The School provides leadership and Child Protection training to the teams of Prefects, Heads of Houses and Heads up the CCF sections. This covers the importance of offering support to younger and more vulnerable pupils, yet stresses their duty to report any concerns;
- Forums such as the School Council, the Boarding Council and the Heads of House meetings provide further opportunities to represent or share concerns.

Monitoring:

- The School asks all its network users to adhere to its code of conduct for the safe use of the internet, and everyone must sign this code to indicate that they have read and understood its terms;
- Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our IT department monitors pupils' use;
- The School may impose sanctions for misuse, or attempted misuse of digital technology, including the internet;
- The School issues all pupils with their own personal school email address and offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, phone numbers, passwords and all other personal details safe, through ICT;
- The School gives instruction on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying through the PSHE programme. Those age 13 and above are advised by a visiting digital expert. Those in the First and Second Forms benefit from a presentation based on materials from CEOP.

Incidents of bullying are kept on record and every effort is made to monitor future progress once a course of action has been agreed.

Records are kept to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach adopted and to enable patterns to be identified so that we have a clear picture of bullying incidents throughout the School.

Pupils are regularly consulted to evaluate the effectiveness of our policies through questionnaires about bullying and through the School Council.

This policy will be reviewed every year or sooner if deemed necessary or with regard to new guidance.

The School uses the guidance provided by the DfE and the Anti-Bullying Alliance to inform its action planning to prevent and tackle bullying.

Appendix A
Organisations that can offer support and some suggested publications:

Most of these organisations can be found on *Facebook* and *Twitter*

Anti–Bullying Alliance (ABA)
This charity was established in 2002 by the NSPCC and the National Children's Bureau; 8 Wakley Street, London EC1V 7QE - www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

Bullying UK
Part of *Family Lives* a national charity providing help and support in all aspects of family life. Skype, email and chatroom are all available and this service is available seven days a week through the free phone line 0808 800 2222. This is now part of the organisation called Bullying Online www.bullying.co.uk

ChildLine
Open 24 hours a day every day and offers a counselling service for young people under 19 0800 1111

Coram Children's Legal Centre
Free legal advice 0808 802 0008 www.childrenslegalcentre.com

Family Lives
Offers a wide range of advice on boundaries, cyber bullying, rights etc. Their helpline offers information, guidance and support and is open from 7:00am to midnight each day 0808 800 2222. http://www.familylives.org.uk/

Get Connected
Offers free confidential help to young people under 25. 0808 808 4994

Kidscape
Works to prevent any kind of bullying, emotional, physical and cyber- bullying. Using adults and a peer support system, they work to provide practical skills and prevent harm. www.kidscape.org.uk or telephone on 0207 730 3300

NSPCC
Offers online safety advice, https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/

Publications

Michele Elliott: *101 Ways to Deal with Bullying, A Guide for Parents*. Published in 1997, but still well regarded. Available on Amazon and Kidscape.

Kidscape website www.kidscape.org.uk

1. '*Bullies, Cyberbullies and Frenemies'* Michele Elliot
2. *'You can beat bullying'* A guide for young people
3. *'Stop Bullying!'*
4. *'Beyond bullying'* A guide for coping after bullying

Parents should access the Parent Portal where insightful and valuable articles written by Michael Gross can be read. We use many of these in the delivery of our PSHE programme.

Appendix B

Some guidelines for parents

Why is your child afraid to speak out?

- Silence and secrecy nurture bullying. It is predominately a secretive activity;
- Children are often afraid to speak out and tell an adult;
- This may be due to fear that adult action will be ineffective, or perhaps fear of retribution;
- Confessing to being bullied is publicly admitting humiliation and weakness;
- Victims often have such low self-esteem that they believe they deserve to be bullied and therefore have no right to complain;
- Fear of having access to their phone or other electronic devices withdrawn.

Typical signs of distress at home may include:

- An unwillingness to attend school;
- Fear of the journey to and from school;
- A pattern of headaches or stomach aches;
- Bruising, scratches;
- Damaged clothing, books etc.;
- Equipment, including electronic equipment has gone missing;
- An untypical request for extra pocket money;
- Loss of money;
- An unexpected decline in standards of work;
- Anxiety, distress or a drop in cheerfulness, yet a reluctance to talk about it;
- An increasing number of absences from school;
- Isolation or has very few friends.

What a member of staff will do when an incident of bullying is reported:

- Tell the pupil they are not at fault;
- Listen carefully to their account;
- Avoid asking unnecessary questions;
- Take the report seriously;
- Reassure the victim and keep him or her safe;
- Offer help and support, discussing possible causes for action with the victim;
- Never agree to keep the matter secret, but encourage the child to allow you to share appropriately;
- Some immediate action may be needed, but consult the tutor and or Housemaster or Housemistress in the first instance;
- Keep the child informed of what is happening until the tutor or HSM is with them.

Appendix C

Main categories of cyberbullying

1. Text-message and email bullying involves sending unwelcome texts or emails that are threatening or cause discomfort;

2. The "Sharing of nude and semi-nude images" is when young people take and share indecent photos of themselves or of others. Pressurising someone to send a nude or semi-nude picture can happen in any relationship and to anyone, whatever his or her age, gender or sexual preference. Having in their possession indecent images of a person under 18 or distributing them to someone else is a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act (2003);

3. Picture/video-clip bullying via mobile phone involves taking photos or filming scenes and using them to make the person being bullied feel threatened or embarrassed, with images usually sent to other people. "Happy Slapping" involves filming and sharing physical attacks;

4. Phone call bullying via mobile phones uses silent calls or abusive messages. Sometimes, the bullied person's phone is stolen and used to harass others, who then think the phone owner is responsible;

5. 'Braping' - pupils 'borrow' another's phone to send jokey or abusive messages to others;

6. Chat room and IM (instant messaging) bullying involves the sending of menacing or upsetting responses to children when they are in a web-based chat room, often as they conduct real-time conversations online;

7. Bullying via websites includes the use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal polling sites, commenting negatively and repeatedly on someone's postings.