



Ashford School

ANTI-BULLYING

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Policy Statement

This policy is guided by the framework outlined in the United Learning Anti-bullying policy, the key requirements of which are:

- The School must publish an anti-bullying policy
- The School must give the policy to parents at the point which pupils join the School
- The School must keep accurate records of bullying incidents
- The School must publish a complaints procedure

This policy applies to all members of our School community, including boarders and those in our EYFS setting. Ashford School is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this Anti-bullying policy is non-discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010).

Ashford School seeks to implement this policy through adherence to the procedures set out in the rest of this document. This document is available to all interested parties on our website and on request from the School Office. This document should be read in conjunction with the policies on Behaviour and PSHE. This document is reviewed annually by the Deputy Head (Pastoral).

Ashford School takes a whole School approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help students become more resilient, be happy and successful and prevent problems before they arise. The Department for Education's (DfE) guideline states that, "in order to help their pupils succeed; schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy". At Ashford School, students can experience a nurturing and supportive environment that has the potential to develop self-esteem and give positive experiences for managing stress, overcoming adversity, and building resilience. We help students to develop an awareness of what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, and where they can go if they need help and support.

This policy has regard to the relevant legislation and Government guidance.

Aim

Ashford School and Ashford Prep School aim to work in partnership with parents to encourage every pupil to act with integrity, responsibility and concern for others. We also wish to promote mutual understanding and respect for others whilst giving each pupil the confidence and independence of mind to enjoy a fulfilling and successful life. Ashford School and Ashford Prep School see themselves as a community which does not tolerate bullying, and which will take positive action against bullying. We understand that bullying is a serious issue and can cause lasting psychological damage and drive young people to desperate measures.

The aim of this policy is to help members of the School community to deal with bullying when it occurs and, even more importantly, to prevent it. Furthermore, we aim to provide a practical and coherent framework to establish an environment where bullying is discouraged and deal sensitively and effectively with any incidents of bullying which may occur, ensuring all pupils feel safe to learn.

Defining bullying and anti-social behaviour

What is bullying?

Bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt or threaten someone. It happens when an individual (or group of individuals) goes out of its way **deliberately** to threaten, frighten, abuse or hurt someone else physically or emotionally. Sometimes it occurs between two individuals in isolation, but it can also take place in the presence of others. It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. The action is **repeated over time** and victims find it difficult to defend themselves.

Bullying can take many different forms, which include:

- ☐ **Physical bullying:** this should not be seen merely in terms of a pupil being physically threatened or assaulted. It can include damage done to the victim's property, clothing or School work
- ☐ **Verbal bullying:** this includes name calling, sarcasm and persistent teasing
- ☐ **Emotional (or mental) bullying:** this is when someone is tormented, ridiculed or humiliated. Often the person who engages in this form of bullying does not consider it to be bullying but refers to it as a "joke". If the victim does not find teasing or taunting funny, then it is not a joke
- ☐ **Indirect bullying:** this involves spreading unpleasant stories about someone, excluding them from a social group or spreading nasty, malicious stories about them
- ☐ **Racist, Religious, Cultural, Sexist, Homophobic or Transphobic bullying:** this is when a pupil is targeted for representing a group; it is likely to hurt not only the victim but also other people in the same group; similarly, pupils who are targeted because they have a disability or a Special Educational Need
- ☐ **Sexual bullying:** this is characterised by unwelcome remarks about appearance, inappropriate (and uninvited) touching and sexual innuendos and propositions. It can also be related to sexual orientation
- ☐ **Cyber bullying:** this is when one person or a group of people aim to threaten, tease or embarrass someone else by using a mobile phone, the internet or other technologies, such as social websites, text messages, photographs or email (see the Online and E-Safety Policy for further details)
- ☐ **Peer-on-peer bullying / abuse:** this is any form of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, and coercive control, exercised between children and within children's relationships (both intimate and

non-intimate). The School recognises the gendered nature of peer-on-peer abuse (i.e. that it is more likely that girls will be “victims” and boys “perpetrators”) and that it can manifest itself in many ways and can include (but is not limited to) sexting, sexual assault, gender-based issues and harmful sexual behaviours including sexual violence and sexual harassment.

Peer-on-peer bullying / abuse can be associated with factors outside the School and can occur online and offline and between children of any age or gender. The School therefore takes a contextual safeguarding approach to managing peer-on-peer abuse. Peer-on-peer bullying / abuse is abuse and is never acceptable. It should never be passed off or dismissed as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”.

All areas of the School should equally be free of “initiation ceremonies” intended to cause pain, anxiety or humiliation

The seriousness of bullying cannot be emphasised enough. Bullying is among the top concerns that parents and the pupils themselves have. Bullying makes the lives of its victims a misery: it can undermine their confidence, self-esteem and sense of security and can be psychologically damaging. Whilst bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws that apply to harassment, assault and threatening behaviour. If staff or parents feel that an offence may have been committed, they should seek assistance from the police.

Who are bullies and why do they bully?

Children who bully others come from all social classes and cultural backgrounds. He/she may believe that bullying will make others respect him/her. He/she may be inadequate, unhappy and insecure and may be in need of help.

It is important to help the bully both to understand that he/she is responsible for hurting someone and that such behaviour will not be tolerated. If a bully is allowed to get away with such behaviour, it will continue; a systematic approach to deal with the bully is necessary.

Who gets bullied?

Anyone can be the victim of bullying, but no one deserves to be bullied. Both boys and girls bully others. Research suggests that some individuals are more likely to be bullied than others, e.g. being different in some obvious respect, lacking social skills, having an over-protective family, having a special educational need and or disability.

At Ashford School we are aware that our boarders may be particularly vulnerable. To this end, pupils are told that there are to be no initiation ceremonies or acts intended to cause pain, anxiety or humiliation. There is no tradition in the School of using younger pupils to perform tasks for older pupils. Boarders have access to a support network which includes the Independent Listener, **Mr Alex Crews**, and **Mrs Elaine Rose**, a member of the LGB with responsibility for boarding. Information regarding support for boarders is issued in the Boarding Handbook for Pupils.

Procedures - Strategies and actions to combat bullying

This policy gives clear guidance to staff on identifying and dealing with bullying in School and it is reviewed regularly.

The School gives clear guidance to parents and pupils of how to deal with bullying. This guidance is given in parent and pupil handbooks. (See Appendix 1 and 2)

Guidance for Teachers

Bullying occurs in every School. We are fortunate in working in an environment where incidents of bullying are unusual. This should not make us complacent; on the contrary, it should make us more determined to preserve what is clearly a valuable part of the School's culture.

As a teacher or other adult within the School, any suspected cases of bullying should be investigated immediately, following the procedures as outlined in this policy.

The School takes the following steps to minimise the risk of peer-on-peer bullying / abuse:

- Classroom behaviour expectations are set out by staff and should ensure that all pupils feel comfortable in their learning environment
- Staff are on duty around the School before School, during break time and during lunchtime
- Staff are available at reception until 6.00pm every day – pupils always have a safe place to go if they are concerned
- Via PSHE and during the normal running of the School day, pupils are encouraged to treat each other with respect and understanding
- All allegations of peer-on-peer abuse are dealt with immediately, in consultation with all parties, and often include mediation meetings between students, where appropriate.

How do I know if bullying is happening?

There are a number of characteristics which make some pupils more vulnerable to being bullied than others. If you think about your own knowledge of incidents where you have become aware of bullying, you will be able to add to this list:

- Lacking close friends, awkwardness, few social skills
- Behaving inappropriately with peers, being a nuisance in some way, latching onto a group where they are not welcome
- Being shy
- Being different in some obvious way e.g. appearance, being excessively clumsy, inept at games
- Coming from an over-protective environment
- Having a family which promotes a child's special qualities in some way
- Being from a minority or racial group

Inevitably, personal judgement is essential in dealing with and investigating cases of bullying; knowledge of individual pupils is critical, and this is why the effective use of the pastoral system is essential. If you have any doubts at all, talk to another member of the staff to find out whether anyone else has noticed a change in behaviour. The following may indicate that bullying is taking place:

- Increased absenteeism
- Withdrawn, remote, absent minded behaviour
- Physical symptoms such as stomach aches, vomiting, limb pains, sleeplessness

What should I do when I feel reasonably sure that bullying is taking place?

Contact the Form Teacher, who will investigate the case thoroughly by:

- Interviewing the bully and victim separately
- Encouraging the pupils concerned to write down what they believed happened
- Keep a written record of:
 - What was said
 - Whether there was a satisfactory solution which left the victim feeling supported and the bully aware that the behaviour was unacceptable
 - Whether further action was necessary
 - Whether the parents were informed
 - What sanctions were imposed

The keeping of written records is essential. The School has a legal obligation to provide an environment where a pupil can learn free from harassment and there are laws, which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour: if staff feel that an offence may have been committed, they should seek assistance from the Police. It may become necessary to provide evidence in a court of law: with this in mind, individual cases of bullying should be monitored at regular intervals, particularly to identify any patterns or trends emerging. Where intervention has not been successful, the Headmaster should be informed. It is often useful to appoint a case officer in extreme (or complicated) cases. In this way, an appointed individual is able to provide an overview of the situation and act as the focus for collecting information.

What does the School do to combat bullying?

The School takes a number of practical measures in order to discourage bullying and to promote an atmosphere of tolerance and respect. These include:

- ☐ Discussing the problems of bullying in the context of the personal, social and emotional development programme. The Prep School Global Awareness scheme of work and Circle Time sessions follow themes which are relevant to reducing bullying
- ☐ SEAL programme follows 7 themes each of which is relevant to reducing bullying
- ☐ Holding staff meetings regularly in which the academic and social progress of individual children can be highlighted and discussed
- ☐ Encouraging staff to be alert to changes in behaviour, friendship groups, punctuality and attendance
- ☐ Making sure that the situation is monitored effectively during breaks and lunch hours
- ☐ Speaking out about bullying in assemblies led by the Headmaster, key pastoral staff and pupils
- ☐ Using current affairs, historical events, drama, literature et al to raise awareness of bullying
- ☐ Encouraging pupils to speak out against bullying via a range of means including the Bullybox app, IWMTK (I Wish My Teacher Knew) box and app, Form Tutors, Mentors, Heads of House, Heads of Section, School Counsellors, buddies, submission form on Surface Go devices etc.
- ☐ A peer mentor system is available to pupils to help address bullying in its initial stages or to guide victims of bullying through the process of telling someone
- ☐ Heads of Section will deliver and keep records of anti-bullying assemblies

Staff are given 'pastoral care' induction sessions and updated on the latest trends in bullying through Inset. External specialist skills are brought in to help understand the needs of our pupils where necessary.

In addition, the School has established pastoral procedures that encourage pupils to speak out when they either find themselves a victim of bullying or see others being bullied and a bullying survey is carried out by sections of the School regularly. An anti-bullying policy is of little use, however, if the School's culture does not promote

an atmosphere of tolerance and respect. Within the supportive atmosphere that such an ethos provides, bullying is considered to be extraordinary behaviour, behaviour moreover which is out of place in the School environment. Children are supported in developing positive mental health through meditation and mindful activities in curriculum time and enrichments.

We recognise that sanctioning children who bully may not always be appropriate. Consideration is given to the context of the incident when deciding on action towards children who bully. In the first instance, children who bully will be given the opportunity to learn from their mistakes and move forward with their peers. Involvement of parents and the use of other support networks may be appropriate at this stage. When sanctions are necessary to deal with bullying, they are intended to hold pupils who bully to account for their behaviour and to ensure that they face up to the harm they have caused and to learn from it. The sanctions will provide an opportunity for the pupil to right the harm they have caused. In cases of severe and persistent bullying the sanctions may ultimately include exclusion.

The School will inform and work with parents in all incidents of bullying, advising them on the strategies to adopt, whether their child is being bullied or the one doing the bullying.

Across the school, CPOMS (a Child Protection software programme) is used to record and monitor incidents of all types of negative behaviour, including bullying. These are reviewed constantly by pastoral leaders in order to spot any trends that might indicate bullying and deal with them at the earliest opportunity. Incidents of bullying are discussed in weekly SLT meetings.

The School will work with external agencies as appropriate, reporting to the police for example in cases where an illegal offence has been committed and, where there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering from, or likely to suffer, significant harm, the incident will be treated as a child protection concern.

Key Personnel Information Poster for Pupils

The following poster can be found around the School, most significantly in the pupil toilets.

Need to talk, but not sure who to talk to in school?

Peer Mentors or any member of the Prefect Team

Any member of the teaching staff

Form Tutor

Head of House

• Franklins	Mr Langford	langfordr@ashfordschool.co.uk
• Knights	Mr Stew	stewa@ashfordschool.co.uk
• Merchants	Miss Bates	batesc@ashfordschool.co.uk
• Pilgrims	Mr Vafidis	vafidist@ashfordschool.co.uk
• Squires	Miss Loughlin	loughlinh@ashfordschool.co.uk
• Yeomen	Mrs Walsh	walshd@ashfordschool.co.uk

Head of Division

• Y7+8	Ms Denton	dentoni@ashfordschool.co.uk
• Y9-11	Mr Curry	curryj@ashfordschool.co.uk
• Y9-Y11 Assistant	Mrs Ndongong	ndongongh@ashfordschool.co.uk
• Y12+13	Mrs Miller	millercl@ashfordschool.co.uk

Deputy Head (Pastoral)

• Mrs Timms	timmsn@ashfordschool.co.uk
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School Chaplain

• Rev Richard Bellamy	bellamyr@ashfordschool.co.uk
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Wellbeing Team

• Wellbeing Manager	Mrs Lisa Ellis	ellisl@ashfordschool.co.uk
• Wellbeing Practitioner	Mrs Holly Webb	webbh@ashfordschool.co.uk

School Nurses

• Nurse Zoe Jefferson	jeffersonz@ashfordschool.co.uk
• Nurse Charlotte Oliver	oliverc@ashfordschool.co.uk
• Nurse Rebecca Coomber	coomberr@ashfordschool.co.uk

External Support

• Mrs Elaine Rose (Governor)	rosee@ashfordschool.co.uk
• Childline	0800 11 11
• Mr Alex Crews (Independent Listener)	07886 701735

Useful Web Links

Useful information can be found at the following site:

http://www.education.gov.uk/search/results?q=anti+bullying&f_topics=thes-tag-475&page=1

Cyberbullying : <http://yp.direct.gov.uk/cyberbullying/>

Don't Suffer in Silence: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying/index.shtml>

Supporting Documentation

Staff Handbook

Boarding Staff Handbook

Bullying Log

V20/10/ii

Date Document Updated	Document Updated by
04/2013	TCW
02/2014	TCW
09/2015	TCW
08/2016	TCW
01/2017	NT/SW
03/2017	NT
10/2017	EW
09/2018	TCW
08/2019	CN / NT
02/2020	CN
03/2020	NT

Date Document Reviewed	Document Reviewed by	Date of next review
06/2013	LGB	06/2014
06/2014	LGB	06/2015
06/2015	LGB	03/2016
03/2016	LGB	03/2017
03/2017	LGB	03/2018
03/2018	LGB	03/2019
03/2019	LGB	03/2020
03/2020	LGB	03/2021

Appendix 1 - Ashford School and Ashford Prep School Procedures and Guidance

Guidance to Parents

The School has an Anti-bullying policy, a document that sets out how the School deals with incidents of bullying. A copy of this will have been given to you when your child joined the School. Further copies can be obtained from the School Office.

As a parent, if you feel that your child is the victim of bullying or you know of another child who is being bullied, contact the School immediately. Your complaint will be taken seriously, and prompt action taken. The immediate point of contact should be the Form Tutor, who should be able to deal with most problems. If the situation does not improve, the Form Tutor will consult the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and, if disciplinary action is considered necessary, we will contact you.

At any point in this process, you are very welcome to come into School and discuss the problem. If, as a parent, you feel that insufficient is being done to address the problem, then you should follow the School's complaints procedure.

It is important to realise that there is a difference between rough play and accidental injury, and bullying. Bullying is **deliberate and repeated** and can take many forms.

Is it bullying?

It is bullying if your child feels hurt because individuals or groups are:

- Persistently calling your child names
- Threatening him/her
- Pressuring your child to give someone money or possessions
- Using physical violence
- Damaging your child's possessions
- Spreading rumours about your child or your family
- Using text, email or web space to write or say hurtful things about your child (cyberbullying)

It is bullying if your child feels hurt because of things said about your ethnic background, religious faith, gender, sexuality, disability, special educational need, appearance or issues in your family.

What to do:

If your child is being bullied

- Calmly talk with your child about his/her experience
- Make a note of what your child says, particularly who was said to be involved, how often bullying has occurred; where it happened and what happened
- Reassure your child that he/she has done the right thing to tell you about the bullying
- Explain to your child that should any further incidents occur, he/she should report them to a teacher immediately
- Make an appointment to see your child's class teacher or Form Tutor
- Explain to the teacher the problems your child is experiencing

When talking with the teachers about bullying

- Try to stay calm, bear in mind that the teacher may have no idea that your child is being bullied or may have heard conflicting accounts of an incident
- Be as specific as possible about what your child says has happened, give dates and places where the incident(s) happened
- Make a note of what action the School intends to take
- Ask if there is anything you can do to help your child in the School
- Stay in touch with the School; let them know if things improve as well as if problems continue

If your child is bullying other children

Often parents are not aware that their child is involved in bullying. Children may sometimes bully others because:

- They do not know it's wrong
- They think it is funny or just a joke
- They are copying older brothers or sisters or other people in the family they admire
- They haven't learnt other, better ways of mixing with their School friends
- Their friends are encouraging or pressurising them to bully others
- They are going through a difficult time and acting out aggressive feelings
- They are "caught up" in a group situation, possibly as a bystander

To stop your child from bullying others

- Talk with your child; explain that he/she is doing is unacceptable and makes other children unhappy
- Discourage other members of your family from bullying behaviour or from using aggression or force to get what they want
- Regularly check with your child how things are going in School
- Give your child lots of praise and encouragement when he or she is cooperative or kind to other people
- Support the School with any strategies implemented to tackle the bullying behaviour
- Encourage your child to intervene when he/she witnesses bullying, either directly or by fetching help from a member of staff, prefect, or another senior pupil

If your child experiences bullying via technology e.g. text message, email, social media etc.

- Inform the School immediately
- Calmly talk with your child about his/her experience
- Keep the message so that it can be shown
- 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 has happened
- Explain to your child to be careful who he/she gives his/her mobile phone or email number to
- Reassure your child that he/she has done the right thing to tell you about the bullying
- Explain to your child that if any further incidents occur, he/she should report them to a teacher immediately
- Make an appointment to see your child's class teacher or Form Tutor
- Explain to the teacher the problems your child is experiencing

Useful Web Links

Cyberbullying: <http://yp.direct.gov.uk/cyberbullying/>

Don't Suffer in Silence: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying/index.shtml>

Appendix 2 - Guidance for Pupils (to be included in homework diaries where applicable and shared in assemblies)

If you are a pupil and are being bullied or know someone who is being bullied, take action and tell an adult. It could be your Form Tutor or anyone else whom you trust to listen to you, take you seriously and help you deal with the problem.

It is important to realise that there is a difference between rough play and accidental injury, and bullying. Bullying is **deliberate and repeated** and can take many forms.

Is it bullying?

It is bullying if you feel hurt because individuals or groups are:

- Calling you names
- Threatening you
- Pressuring you to give someone money or possessions
- Hitting you
- Damaging your possessions
- Spreading rumours about you or your family
- Using text, email or web space to write or say hurtful things (cyberbullying)

It is bullying if you feel hurt because of things said about your ethnic background, religious faith, gender, sexuality, disability, special education need, appearance or issues in your family.

Our School does not tolerate bullying. This is what we do about bullying:

- Make sure that the person being bullied is safe
- Work to stop the bullying happening again
- Provide support to the person being bullied
- Do not stand by and allow bullying to happen: intervene, either directly or by fetching help from a responsible adult, prefect or other senior pupil

Remember – No one deserves to be frightened, abused or hurt by someone else. Always tell an adult you can trust, and things will improve.

What to do:

If you are being bullied

- Try to stay calm and look as confident as you can
- Be firm and clear – look them in the eye and tell them to stop
- Get away from the situation
- Tell an adult what has happened straight away

After you have been bullied

- Tell your teacher or another adult in the School
- Tell your family
- If you are scared to tell a teacher or an adult on your own, ask a friend to go with you

- Keep on speaking until someone listens and does something to stop the bullying
- Do not blame yourself for what has happened

When you are talking to an adult about bullying

Be clear about

- What has happened to you
- How often it has happened
- Who was involved
- Who saw what was happening
- Where it happened
- What you have done about it already

If you experience bullying by mobile phone or text messages or email

- Tell your teacher, friend or parent
- Keep the message so that it can be shown
- Make a note of when the threatening message was sent
- Be careful who you give your mobile phone or email address to

Useful Web Links

Cyberbullying

<http://yp.direct.gov.uk/cyberbullying/>

Don't Suffer in Silence

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying/index.shtml>