

Anti – Bullying Policy

This policy applies all students in the college

Edgbaston College



**EDGBASTON
COLLEGE**

Created November 2020

Date for revision November 2021

Annual review

Owais Ahmed Headteacher

Contents

1. Aims	3
2. Definition	3
3. Signs and Symptoms of Bullying	5
4. Action against Bullying	5
5. Cyberbullying	6
6. Procedures to Follow	6
7. Information and Guidance for Students	8
8. Information and Guidance for Parents	8

Edgbaston College Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy has regard to the updated DfE guidance *'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (July 2017)* and the *'Supporting Bullied Children' factsheet (October 2014)*. It draws on the 2019 DfE guidance on the Independent Schools Standards and also the previous guidance, *'Safe to Learn - Embedding Anti-Bullying Work in Schools'*.

In relation to cyberbullying, the policy takes note of the DfE guidance: *'Cyberbullying: advice for headteachers and school staff (2014)'* and *'Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying (2014)'*.

In relation to online safety, reference should also be made to the college's e-safety policy.

"It is a basic entitlement of all children that they receive their education free from humiliation, oppression and abuse. Education is compulsory in our society and therefore it is the responsibility of all adults to ensure that it takes place in an atmosphere which is caring and protective."

D P Tattum

1. Aims

The overall aims of this policy are the prevention of bullying and, should instances of bullying occur, to help staff and students to deal with it effectively.

In this respect, the college seeks:

- To ensure that students learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment, without fear of being bullied
- To ensure that everyone connected with the college is aware of the nature and types of bullying that may occur, both in and out of college, and their causes and effects
- To ensure high expectations of students' behaviour, as detailed in the college's behaviour policy
- To use all students, staff and parents as a positive resource in the elimination of any form of bullying, drawing on peer pressure as a means of preventing bullying
- To ensure that everyone connected with the college is aware that bullying is totally unacceptable
- To ensure that everyone is aware of their responsibilities in addressing bullying issues
- To provide regular staff training in relation to the prevention of and response to bullying
- To develop effective strategies to prevent bullying
- To provide a consistent college response to any bullying and have clear procedures for dealing with incidents
- To provide support for both victim and bully.

2. Definition

Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, by an individual or a group, which intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally and possibly causing psychological damage. It is usually repeated over a period of time, where it is often difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

It can happen anywhere, both in and out of college.

Bullying can have a negative life-long impact. It can make it difficult for students to learn and can have a lasting detrimental effect on their lives. Young people who have been bullied can become anxious and withdrawn, depressed or aggressive. Some turn to substance misuse as a way of dealing with it emotionally and, at worst, bullying has been a factor in suicide. (Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour).

Bullying can take various different forms, including:

- Racial/Religious/Cultural – where someone is made to feel inferior because of their background, culture or religion.
- Sexual/sexist - bullying based on something specifically linked to gender.
- Homophobic - bullying based on sexual orientation
- Special Needs or Disability - any exploitation of a particular aspect of a student's disability and/or special educational needs
- Because a student is adopted or a carer
- Cyber-bullying via technology. For example, internet/mobile phones, email, social networks, text messages, photographs. (Please refer to separate section, below.)

These forms of bullying reflect the 'protected characteristics' as defined in the 2010 Equality Act. These are:

- Age,
- Disability,
- Gender reassignment,
- Marriage and civil partnership,
- Pregnancy and maternity,
- Race,
- Religion or belief,
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.

Edgbaston College recognises that people who have a protected characteristic may experience an additional vulnerability to being bullied. Throughout the curriculum and co-curriculum and, in particular, through the PSHE programme, staff work to develop a sense of tolerance and respect towards people who have a protected characteristic, in line with the college's promotion of fundamental British values. Any bullying on the basis of a protected characteristic is taken very seriously. The college's log of bullying incidents enables any issues arising out of a protected characteristic to be identified and characterised to facilitate the monitoring of patterns or trends, the college's success in its anti-bullying strategies and its active promotion of the students' well-being.

Bullying can include name-calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, kicking, hitting, pushing, taking belongings, inappropriate touching, producing offensive graffiti, spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours or regularly excluding someone from groups or games. It is also bullying when a young person is pressured to act against their will by others or is harassed by unwanted conduct, which violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading or humiliating environment.

Although bullying is noted usually to be repeated over time, the college will, where appropriate, take action in response to a single incident and keep an appropriate record.

Staff are aware that peer-on-peer abuse, including upskirting, is closely allied with bullying and that initiation ceremonies may also have the effect of causing harm, embarrassment or physical or emotional distress. Staff work to raise the students' awareness of the potential damage of such incidences in order to minimise their occurrence. Any such issues will be dealt with in accordance with this policy.

As noted in the DfE Guidance 'Behaviour and Discipline in Schools', the headteacher has the authority to take disciplinary action in relation to events which take place away from the college premises. (Refer to the Behaviour Policy for further details). In this respect, the college will take seriously and respond appropriately, in accordance with this policy, to reports of bullying, including cyber-bullying, which take place away from college.

As a statutory requirement, the Anti-Bullying Policy is available to parents of students and prospective students via the college website. Its content and implications are discussed with students, for example, in lessons, assemblies and other relevant occasions.

3. Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

A student may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and should investigate if a student:

- Is unwilling to go to college
- Is frequently absent from college
- Regularly has homework which is not done or lost
- Changes his or her usual routine
- Becomes anxious, withdrawn or is lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Cries him- or herself to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Feels ill in the morning
- Begins to achieve less well in college work
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- Has possessions which are damaged or “go missing”
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully)
- Has money continually “lost”
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Stops eating
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other students or siblings
- Is frightened to say what’s wrong
- Is afraid to use the internet, social media or mobile phone
- Is nervous or jumpy when a cyber message is received
- Is evasive or gives improbable excuses in relation to any of the above

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems or circumstances, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

4. Action against Bullying

It is essential that all adults in the college community know what to do when they suspect that a student is being bullied and which member of staff to contact. Whether bullying occurs in college, out of college or on-line, staff will have a range of appropriate strategies on which to call:

- Skilled observation to recognise and respond to the symptoms noted above.
- Ready receipt of reports of bullying behaviour, which are then investigated, acted upon and the information relating to the alleged bully and their victims reported as appropriate.
- Use of the college curriculum, for example in subjects such as PSHE, drama, computing, English and history, to embrace the topic of bullying, including its dangers, how to prevent it and the steps to take when it occurs.
- Use, as above, of other elements of college life, including assemblies, tutorials, house meetings, college council and visiting speakers.
- Use, as above, of focussed projects, such as an annual Anti-Bullying Week, and focussed training, for example in safe use of the internet.
- Availability of this policy on the college’s website to enable parents to understand the college’s approach and work together with staff.
- Close parent/teacher liaison to ensure that both home and college work together to help and support the victim and moderate the behaviour of the bully.

- Where appropriate and following discussion with the headteacher, engagement with outside agencies, such as an educational psychologist, social worker or the police - in helping students who bully others.
- Ensuring that staff are fully aware of times and places when bullying is most likely to occur; organisation of the college day and supervision arrangements reduce the likely incidence of bullying. This includes supervision of changing and showering areas, monitoring the use of washrooms and cloakrooms at break times and the regular coverage of secluded areas at break times by duty staff.
- A good proportion of PE and games lessons and other physical activity to enable students to burn off energy and aggression.
- Use of strategies such as tutor groups as part of the college's pastoral care to encourage vertical bonding between age groups, giving older students a sense of responsibility and younger students a chance to externalise feelings and anxieties that they may not share with an adult member of staff or even their own family.
- All students given the opportunity to speak to their tutor. This person is someone they feel comfortable with, who knows the student well and understands that the student may turn to him or her. Where it is recognised that a student may not be comfortable turning to his form teacher or tutor, alternative arrangements will be put in place.
- Familiarity of all staff with this policy; staff will sign to say that they have read and understood this policy.
- Through staff training and by regular discussion at staff meetings, raising the awareness of all staff to the dangers of bullying, how to prevent it, what action to take to resolve problems, and developing an understanding of the legal responsibilities and the sources of support available.
- Dove-tailing this policy with the college behaviour policy so that all concerned are aware of the appropriate procedures and sanctions.
- Where appropriate, training in, or drawing on, external expertise in specialist skills to understand students' specific needs, for example to assist staff in being vigilant and in taking appropriate action in relation to the vulnerability to bullying of students with SEND.

5. Cyberbullying

The college is conscious of the dangers of cyberbullying, in relation to both safeguarding and anti-bullying strategies. A range of measures is set in place to guard against it. The college's firewall and filtering systems are organised and monitored to ensure, so far as is possible, that students are protected from inappropriate content, including extremist materials and those designed to radicalise. The college recognises that no filtering system is perfect and, in their ICT and PSHE lessons, students learn the steps they should take, should they encounter inappropriate content. The college also recognises that systems can only protect the students whilst using college equipment in college. In their studies, particularly in ICT and PSHE lessons, they therefore learn how to keep themselves safe whilst online away from the college premises. This includes the development of their resilience to resist radicalisation. Similarly, the college provides information for parents and periodically runs workshops to enable them to gain a greater understanding of how they can help to keep their children safe online at home.

In their ICT and PSHE lessons, through assemblies and focussed workshops, students also learn about the dangers of cyber-bullying via technology, for example through mobile phones, email, social networks, text messaging and photography. They are given guidance on how to resist and report such approaches, including exercising prudence in the use of personal information on social networking sites. Further information can be found in the college's e-safety policy.

6. Procedures to Follow

This policy only works if it ensures that the whole college community understands that bullying is not to be tolerated and understands the steps that will be taken both to prevent and to respond to bullying.

The Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher will be informed of any incidents of bullying and will ensure that all incidents are thoroughly investigated and properly logged centrally on the College MIS. The Headteacher will then collaborate with the Head of Pastoral Care in ensuring that an investigation takes place in every case and each situation is treated seriously. If bullying is found to have definitely occurred, the parents of any children involved will be contacted and informed of what action the college is to take by the Headteacher or Head of Pastoral Care.

The Headteacher will ensure that the Head of Pastoral Care and all staff undertake appropriate training in taking action against bullying.

The Role of the Head of Pastoral Care

The main roles of the Head of Pastoral Care in respect of bullying are:

- Managing and monitoring practices to ensure alignment with the college anti-bullying policy and procedures.
- Maintaining a clear overview of the incidence of bullying and the college's anti-bullying prevention and response strategies.
- Liaison with the Headteacher and between all parties involved, including parents.
- Ensuring that incident slips are completed by staff in all cases and that a copy is stored in the incident file.
- On a regular basis, analysis of the incident file so that patterns and trends can be identified and the analysis used to improve policy and practice.
- Promotion and co-ordination of anti-bullying initiatives and projects both within the curriculum and in the wider aspects of college life (as highlighted in 4, above).
- Deployment of appropriate strategies to ensure that bullies change their behaviour and support them in doing so.

The Head of Pastoral Care will be fully briefed by the Headteacher, who will ensure that he or she receives appropriate training, guidance and information.

The Role of the Staff

It is essential that all members of staff contribute to creating a college ethos which does not tolerate bullying and minimises the likelihood of incidents ever occurring.

- Staff must ensure that they have read and understand this policy. They must sign to confirm this.
- Staff must ensure that their training in taking action against bullying remains up to date.
- Staff will be aware of and exploit aspects the curriculum and wider aspects of college life where they can embrace the topic of bullying, including its dangers, how to prevent it and the steps to take when it occurs.

In any case where bullying is reported or suspected, staff must follow this procedure:

1. In most cases the incident should be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who is approached.
2. Listen carefully and intently.
3. Reassure the student that you are sympathetic and that the problem will be resolved.
4. Do not ask any leading questions.
5. Do not promise to keep the issue confidential – it is important to maintain the students' trust by remaining honest.
6. Make a clear account of the conversation on an incident slip as soon as it has ended, but try to avoid taking notes during discussion.

7. Report the matter as soon as is practical to the Head of Pastoral Care. In his/her absence, report the matter to the Headteacher.
8. Discuss with the Head of Pastoral Care how to proceed with, for example, further interviews, liaison with parents and what action is to be taken, in accordance with the college's behaviour policy.
9. Continue to address the incident as agreed with the Head of Pastoral Care
10. Ensure that the incident continues to be fully recorded on the incident slip, together with details of what action has been taken.
11. Liaise with the Head of Pastoral Care to ensure that all staff are kept informed of the incident and action taken, as appropriate
12. Remember that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, and at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person. Staff should refer to the policy on physical restraint
13. Ensure that appropriate support is provided for all parties concerned.
14. A bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a student is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm; the matter should be reported to the DSL and procedures should be followed, as detailed in the safeguarding policy. This is likely to involve reporting the incident to Social Care, and also to the police if it is believed that the safeguarding situation constitutes a criminal concern.

7. Information and Guidance for Students

- As a member of the college, we expect you not to have to put up with any form of bullying behaviour. We can and will help to put a stop to it.
- You should feel free to speak out to your parents or any teacher if you are being bullied. We can help you to cope with it straight away.
- When someone else is being bullied or is in distress, inform a member of staff immediately.
- Do not be afraid to report any incidents. Watching and doing nothing can suggest support for the bully. Even if you are just a bystander, you have a role to play in reporting any incidence of bullying.
- If you wish to inform the college of an incident involving bullying or perceived bullying but want to remain anonymous, you can write a note and send it to the Head of Pastoral Care.
- Do not put up with bullies in your group of friends. Bullies will soon stop if they are left out or are by themselves.
- Take care how you speak and act towards other students. Always aim to be considerate and helpful.

8. Information and Guidance for Parents

- You may not recognise that your child is being bullied. However, changes in their manner, behaviour and general state of health can sometimes be explained by bullying.
- Encourage your child to talk about it, but be patient. It is quite natural for him or her not to want to discuss the matter and not to want you to do anything about it.
- Listen and try not to interrupt.
- Reassure him or her that you are sympathetic and that it is a problem that can be solved. It happens to most people at some time.
- Ask him or her if there are ways of changing things and help them to try to develop strategies to cope, strategies which should then be practised.
- Try to keep the situation in proportion and so remain good-humoured.
- Encourage your child to talk to a teacher or their tutor about the matter.
- You should feel free to contact your child's teacher to discuss the matter if you are concerned.

END