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# Anti-Bullying Policy

## 2023-2024

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Person with overall responsibility for :	Principal
Review Cycle:	Annual
Date Reviewed:	April 2023
Date Approved:	April 2023
Approved by:	Principal



## Introduction

Everyone at The Skipton Academy has the right to feel welcome, secure and happy. Only if this is the case will all members of the school community be able to achieve to their maximum potential.

The Department for Education defines bullying as:

Behaviour that is:

- repeated
- intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally
- often aimed at certain groups, for example because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation

Bullying exists in all schools just as it exists in all aspects of society. Any situation when a student is feeling frightened, isolated or vulnerable as a result of the repeated deliberate hurtful actions of others must be regarded as bullying.

The school has developed a caring environment where all students are aware that there are people who will listen and support them. We encourage an atmosphere of mutual respect and openness where students are able to develop their self-esteem and confidence.

Bullying can take various forms:

- Physical – for example fighting, damaging or hiding someone's clothes or belongings; and
- Psychological – for example excluding someone from a group, activity or place; aggressive name calling; cyber bullying via social networking websites, phone calls, text messages, photographs or emails; or unpleasant remarks or actions.

Bullying may also be:

- Racist or relating to someone's religion or culture;
- Sexual, for example talking to someone in a sexually inappropriate way;
- Sexist – related to a person's gender or gender reassignment;
- Related to someone's sexual orientation;
- Related to someone's disability, special educational needs, learning difficulties, intellectual ability, health or appearance
- Related to pregnancy or maternity; and
- Related to someone's home circumstance.

## The Purposes of the Anti-Bullying Policy are

- To create a secure and safe school environment free from threatening or dominating behaviour;
- To work towards an attitude of intolerance by the school community of any unkind words or actions;
- To provide systems which make it easy for students to report incidents confidentially;
- To deal with those incidents sensitively and effectively.



### **What the School will do**

- Identify strategies for students, parents and staff to help them deal with bullying incidents;
- Use the curriculum, assemblies, school council, personal development and other pastoral opportunities to reinforce the ethos of the school;
- Encourage students to report any incidents of bullying to an adult within school;
- Investigate and record all reported incidents of bullying, including racist and homophobic abuse;
- Discuss bullying issues appropriate to the incident and to the student's age and level of understanding - using the most appropriate strategy. Problem solving or 'No Blame' approach may be adopted;
- Offer help, support and advice to victims;
- Deal with the situation using appropriate behaviour modification measures including sanctions;
- Seek to ensure that all students know the difference between bullying and simply "falling out";
- Monitor incidents of bullying and take appropriate actions when patterns emerge.

### **Evaluation**

The implementation of this policy will initially be evaluated annually by the School Leadership Team who will then take any action(s) necessary and report to the Trust Board.

### **Responsibilities**

A decision will be taken initially about the level of seriousness of the incidents concerned, before beginning the anti-bullying process. If the bullying includes abuse relating to any protected characteristic, it should be recorded in CPOMS and the serious incidents log.

### **Procedure**

1. In the first instance, both the bully and the victim should be counselled by the Pastoral Lead. It may be necessary to contact the parents/carers of the victim and the bully;
2. If the incidents continue, the parents/carers should be invited into school to see the Pastoral Lead. A strategy should be developed with the consent of both sets of parents/carers concerned to deal with the problem;
3. If the incidents continue, the parents/carers are brought in to see a member of the senior leadership team. Further counselling takes place of both bully and victim. Additional external help may be sought for the bully and victim, through other outside agencies;
4. Suspension procedures may be used if appropriate;

### **Recording**

1. Any incident should be logged on CPOMS by the person dealing with the incident. The bully and/or victim may also record the events in writing;
2. Discussions with both parties should be documented by the person dealing with the incident, as soon as possible after the events;
3. The parents/carers should be contacted by the person dealing with the incident and given an explanation of the incident;
4. All the above must be recorded on CPOMS;
5. Serious incidents must be recorded in the Serious Incidents Log.



### **Guidelines for Teachers and Other Staff**

- Watch for early signs of distress in students – deterioration of work, spurious illness, isolation, the desire to remain with adults, often being late for lessons and late for school, low self-esteem, bruises and cuts, avoidance of school. All of the above may be symptomatic of other problems but may be early signs of bullying;
- Be available and willing to listen. Treat the information seriously;
- Record each incident precisely and be seen to do this;
- Offer the victim immediate support and help by putting the school's procedures into operation;
- Avoid the "bullying" model when applying sanctions. Do not bully the student who is bullying. Try to negotiate an agreed form of atonement which is acceptable to both the victim and the bully;
- All observed incidents of bullying must be stopped immediately. They must then be dealt with either immediately or at a later more appropriate time;
- Use other students as a positive resource for combating bullying;
- Help the student who is bullying to become aware that his/her actions are considered to be bullying and that these are hurtful to the victim;
- Break up groups of students who bully by not allowing them to play, sit, eat etc., together;
- Bullying is always wrong – a victim of bullying must not be made to feel guilty because he/she is bullied. The victim, must, however, be made aware that some behaviour can easily be used as an excuse for bullying;
- If bullying is happening to students on the way home, inform the parents of this, keep the student who is bullying at school until everyone has left. Do not allow the students who are bullying to leave together;
- Use peer pressure against bullying behavior;
- Help students think about strategies to use;
- Sexual and racial harassment also needs to be discussed and dealt with;
- Ensure that students know what to do when they are bullied;
- Tell the students from day one that bullying of any kind is not tolerated in the school. Everyone is expected to ensure that it does not happen and has the responsibility to tell – this is not telling tales;
- Have clearly stated procedures for dealing with students who bully.

### **Guidelines for Students (some things to do if you are being bullied)**

- Go around with a friend or two;
- Stay with groups of people even if they are not your friends;
- Get your friends together and say no to the bully;
- Tell a teacher;
- Tell any other adult you can trust;
- Tell them again if the bullying does not stop;
- Try not to show you are upset, which is difficult;
- Walk confidently even if you don't feel that way inside.
- Just walk past if people call you unpleasant names;
- Practice what you would say to the bully in front of a mirror;
- If you are in danger, get away. Do not try to keep possessions;



- If you are different in some way, be proud of it! It is good to be an individual and we are all different;
- Tell yourself you don't deserve to be bullied.

### **Guidelines to Parents/Carers**

- Watch for signs – not wanting to go to school, minor illnesses, headaches, other pointers, avoiding friends, coming home with bruises or torn clothing, possessions disappearing;
- Listen to what your child says, try to establish that the problem really is bullying and not something else;
- Discuss with your child what you can do;
- **Always report incidents to school.** Talk to the teacher or another sympathetic adult in school. Do this for as long as the bullying continues;
- Help your child to deal with the problem by themselves.
- If your child needs escorting home, agree a meeting place. The school gate may not be the best place;
- Try not to be over anxious or over protective. It may sometimes be helpful to talk with the bully's parents, but before you do this, take advice from the school first;
- Do not promote a simple "thump back" approach this rarely helps and may only make things worse for your child.

### **Anti-bullying Ambassadors**

A number of students in school have been successfully trained as Anti-Bullying Ambassadors. The aim of the programme is to empower students to support others and be upstanders against bullying behaviour and build a support network for their peers. They will be working on shaping attitudes and changing behaviours. Their overarching aim to be pillars of support, look out for others and become a strong voice in the school community. Finally, they are trained to report any incidents of bullying to form tutors and the pastoral staff.