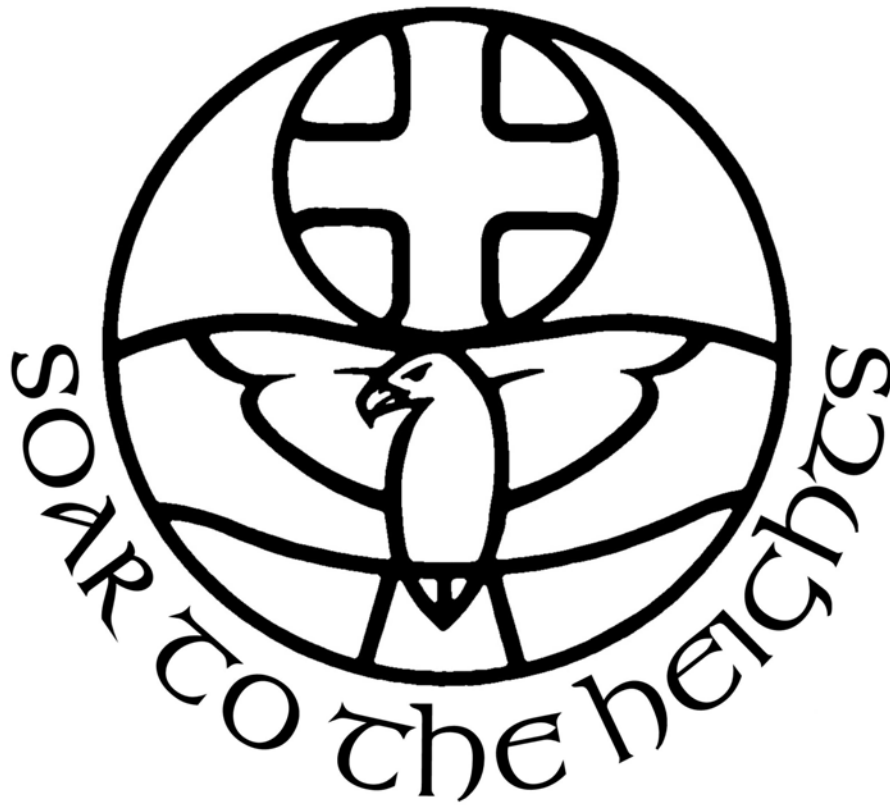


The Venerable Bede Church of
England Secondary School



ANTI-BULLYING policy

Bullying

'See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to good to one another and to all.'

1 Thessalonians 5.15

School Policy

All children have an absolute right to be educated in a safe and secure environment and to be protected from others who may wish to harm, degrade or abuse them.

Bullying may be verbal, physical or psychological. In fact any action which makes a child feel uncomfortable, insecure or threatened, may be defined as bullying. The school disapproves of bullying in all its forms and considers it a most serious offence. The pupils know that bullying is completely unacceptable and that they must "tell a teacher" if it happens to them. The staff take the lead in creating a climate in which pupils will report immediately any bullying incident in the expectation that it will be dealt with urgently and firmly.

All staff are required to report incidents of suspected bullying to the Tutor and Head of House of both bullies and victims. The Director of the Faculty of Learner Support must be informed by the Head of House of any bullying incidents. Appropriate action is then taken.

The Department for Education and Employment recently published an information pack entitled "Don't Suffer in Silence" which, as well as providing guidance, makes clear its expectations in relation to schools response to the problem of bullying. This message is repeated in the joint DfEE/DoH publication "Working Together to Safeguard Children" which states "All settings in which children are provided with services or are living away from home should have in place rigorously enforced anti-bullying strategies". Furthermore the principle of children having a right to an education free from harassment and degradation is embodied in the Human Rights Act 1998.

Effective management of bullying is a shared responsibility and strategies should involve school staff; parents/carers and other professionals involved with children who are the victims or perpetrators of bullying behaviour.

Scope

This policy applies only to incidents of bullying which take place on school premises. The School is not **legally** responsible for bullying which takes place elsewhere. (L.B.S.v Sussex C.C.)

However, the school has an enduring interest in the welfare and conduct of its pupils and will respond positively to any information it receives about bullying outside school thus:

- If it emerges that if a pupil is responsible for bullying other children outside school then this matter will be addressed and (if appropriate) the bully's parents informed.
 - If a child is found to be the victim of bullying outside school then help and support will be offered and advice given on how to avoid further incidents in future. The victim's parents will be informed.
 - If there are more general concerns about children's safety outside school then the local police will be contacted and their help sought in making the area around the school premises more secure. If concerns arise in relation to school transport then the issue will be raised with the transport companies and their help sought in dealing with the problem.
 - If information is received that a child is being bullied by a sibling outside school this will initially be discussed with the parents. If concerns persist then the matter will be referred to the Community Services Department (see Child Protection Procedures).
 - If children are being bullied by pupils of another school the Head of that school will be informed and invited to deal with the matter.
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Guidelines for staff on the prevention of Bullying

‘Jesus said, ‘Let the children come to me, and do not stop them;...’

Matthew 19.14

- Bullying, whether physical, verbal, or psychological is to be deplored and will not be tolerated at The Venerable Bede School.
- It is up to everyone to be aware and work together to prevent bullying from happening.
- It is important to institute peer pressure against bullying with the involvement of all staff and to develop positive strategies for children to cope with this type of situation.

Each case will be treated individually and depending on circumstances, one or more of the following strategies will be employed.

- Interviews/counselling of bully/victim by the Tutor (this may be done individually or together). (Head of House to be informed)
 - Informing the parents of both the bully and the victim of the incident by telephone and/or letter. (Head of House to be involved)
 - Requesting interviews with the parents of the bully and/or the victim. (Tutor, Head of House to be involved. DIRECTOR OF THE FACULTY OF LEARNER SUPPORT TO BE INFORMED)
 - When appropriate, involve outside agencies on behalf of the victim or bully.
 - Regular follow up to bullying incidents are dealt with or instigated by Head of House and/or Director of the Faculty of Learner Support. This will be by letter or telephone to parents and by interview with bully or victim. Daily reporting to Head of House/Director of the Faculty of Learner Support by the victim should be used.
 - Requesting interviews with the parents of the bully and/or the victim. (Head of House, Director of the Faculty of Learner Support).
 - Clear written records to be kept by Tutor/Head of House/Director of the Faculty of Learner Support of all repeated bullying behaviour by perpetrator.
 - Clear written records to be kept by Head of House/Director of the Faculty of Learner Support of all incidents in victims files.
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Post incident responses for the victim

*Every word of God proves true;
He is a shield to those who take
Refuge in Him.*

Proverbs 30.5

When a member of staff receives information, either directly or indirectly, that a child may have been the victim of a bullying incident, this report will be taken seriously and investigated.

The School will offer a proactive, sympathetic and supportive response to children who are the victims of bullying. The exact nature of the response will be determined by the particular child's individual needs and may include:

- Immediate action to stop the incident and secure the child's safety
 - Positive reinforcement that reporting the incident was the correct thing to do
 - Reassurance that the victim is not responsible for the behaviour of the bully
 - Strategies to prevent further incidents
 - Sympathy and empathy
 - Counselling
 - Befriending
 - Assertiveness training
 - Extra supervision/monitoring
 - Creation of a support group
 - Peer mediation/peer mentoring
 - Informing/involving parents
 - Adult mediation between the perpetrator and the victim (provided this does not increase the victim's vulnerability)
 - Arrangements to review progress
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Sanctions that may be imposed on a bully

'...If your brother sins, you must rebuke the offender, and if there is repentance, you must forgive.'

Luke 17.3

These include:

- Immediate action to stop an incident of bullying in progress
- Engagement with the bully to reinforce the message that their behaviour is a breach of school rules and is unacceptable
- Daily report
- Counselling/instruction in alternative ways of behaving
- Community involvement in school.
- Removal of privileges/activities
- Detentions.
- Exclusion from peers/lesson.
- Adult mediation between the perpetrator and the victim (provided this is safe for the victim)
- Rewards/positive reinforcement for children in order to promote change and bring unacceptable behaviour under control
- Exclusion from peers/lesson.
- Exclusion from school.

STAFF MUST DEAL IMMEDIATELY WITH ANY INCIDENT THEY WITNESS, EITHER IN THEIR OWN CLASSROOM OR AROUND THE SCHOOL.

COMMUNICATION IS ESSENTIAL AND SUSPECTED BULLYING MUST BE REPORTED TO THE TUTOR AND HEAD OF HOUSE.

THE HEAD OF HOUSE IN TURN MUST INFORM THE DIRECTOR OF THE FACULTY OF LEARNER SUPPORT.

REGULAR FOLLOW-UP IS VITAL. THE DIRECTOR OF THE FACULTY OF LEARNER SUPPORT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING THIS OCCURS.

Signs that might indicate bullying is occurring

These include:

- change of friendship groups
- lack of friends
- school rejection
- 'illness' at certain times or on certain days
- change in standard of work
- withdrawal/sudden lack of confidence
- severe cases of depression

Although the above list is most likely to apply to victims, changes in behaviour could indicate that someone has developed anti-social traits and may be bullying.

Exclusions

Exclusions are used in exceptional cases only and when the nature of the behaviour is such that the school wishes to signal a strong degree of disapproval. Such behaviour includes physical violence to staff or pupils, verbal abuse to staff, persistent bullying of other pupils, consistently poor behaviour over a sustained period and persistent disruption of the learning of others.

Fixed Term Exclusion - Pupils against whom such action is taken are not normally re-admitted unless an undertaking is given concerning future conduct. Parents are required to be present at the re-admission. In some cases an interview with the Governors' Committee will take place.

Permanent Exclusion - This is reserved for the most serious breaches of discipline.

*God is our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the
Earth should change,
Though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;
Though its waters roar and foam,
Though the mountains tremble with its tumult.*

Psalm 46

Complaints Procedure

Guidance on how to deal with your concerns – Please tell us about it.

At The Venerable Bede School we firmly believe in a circle of communication, between parents, pupils, and the school. Without this pupils needs are not best met. With over 1000 pupils in the school all kinds of queries arise on a daily basis. We have prepared this guidance document to help parents know who to contact.

If you have a concern or complaint

We would like you to tell us about it. We welcome suggestions for improving our work and want to know if you have any concerns. If you have a concern, please let us know as soon as possible. It is difficult for us to properly investigate an incident which happened some time ago.

Staff at the school will make every effort to respond to your call/letter within 48 hours. More serious issues will be responded to within 24 hours. Due to the complex nature of some issues it is not always possible to resolve matters within this time frame, but staff will at the very least acknowledge your concern and indicate who is dealing with the matter.

When telephoning, please be aware that most staff will be teaching and that on many occasions you will be asked to leave a message. If the matter is urgent then you can ask the office staff to find you a senior member of staff who will be able to help you.

If you are not sure of the name of the person you want to speak to, the office staff can tell you who you need to contact.

PLEASE NOTE ...

It is not always possible to come into school without a prior appointment and expect to see a member of staff. To avoid disappointment, please book an appointment.

Concern or Complaint?

If a concern is raised and not dealt with, it becomes a complaint. Concerns and routine queries should be raised with Form Tutors and Heads of House. Complaints of a serious nature should be made to the Senior Manager or the Headteacher, or if the complaint refers to the Headteacher, to the designated Governor.

Please, raise your concerns before they become complaints.

In some circumstances it is necessary for the line manager to pass down an issue to another member of staff. This does not mean that the school is taking your concern any less seriously. Through delegation we are trying to ensure that your concern is dealt with as quickly as possible.

What can you do to help?

- Keep us up to date with contact numbers as work, home, mobile, fax, and e-mail are all useful in helping us to contact you more efficiently.
- When telephoning, please be aware that most staff will be teaching and that on many occasions you will be asked to leave a message. If the matter is urgent then you can ask the office staff to find you a senior member of staff who will be able to help you.
- Know who to contact.

Tutor
(concern)



Head of House
(concern)



Director of the Faculty of Learner Support
(complaint)



Headteacher
(complaint)



Governors
(formal complaint)

The Tutor

We place great emphasis on the role of the Tutor. It is the Tutor who has the most regular contact with your child, monitoring attendance, academic performance and the general welfare of your child.

If you have a query or a concern please contact the Tutor first.

If the tutor is unable to resolve the situation they will seek assistance of the Head of House.

Head of House

If you are unhappy with the response of the Tutor you should then speak to your child's Head of House.

You would be advised to do this if you are unhappy with the response of the tutor, the tutor is unavailable due to illness, the matter concerns the tutor, or the matter directly relates to work undertaken by the Head of House, i.e. a letter sent home. If the Head of House is unable to resolve the situation they will seek assistance from their Senior Manager, for example strong complaints over the standard of education your child was receiving at The Venerable Bede School.

The Director of the Faculty of Learner Support

In some cases you may wish to speak to the Senior Manager who line manages the Head of House. This may be because you are unhappy with the response from the Head of House, the Head of House is absent, or the matter directly concerns their work. We would consider calls that go straight through to the Senior Manager would be of a very serious nature,

The Headteacher

If you have a complaint which you feel should be looked at by the Headteacher in the first instance you can contact Dr. Yeates straight away. It is usually best to discuss such problems face to face, and for this you will need an appointment. This can be done by telephoning and asking to speak to the Head's Secretary, to whom you may speak in confidence. It is always useful if Dr. Yeates is made aware of the nature of the complaint before he meets with parents as it enables him to make some initial investigations on your behalf.

Formal Complaints

We will do all that we can to resolve matters straight away but if you are not entirely satisfied with the Teachers' response (or with the Headteacher's actions if he has already been involved) you can make a formal complaint to the Governors. This should be made in writing.

The Headteacher (or designated governor) will contact you to discuss the problem. Usually you will be invited to a meeting. You may wish to bring a friend or someone else with you. The Headteacher (or designated governor) will then carry out an investigation of the complaint. You will receive a written response to your complaint.

Bullying Policy - for Parents

No school is immune from bullying and no school should be complacent. If bullying occurs at The Venerable Bede School it is vitally important that all of us should know what action to take.

We have produced three guides to deal with any occurrence: one for parents (produced below), one for staff who all have a copy) and one for pupils.

Please read your guide carefully and act on it if necessary.

Staff at The Venerable Bede School recognise bullying behaviour as all forms of physical and psychological abuse systematically directed at victims who find this hurtful. We take responsibility for helping all pupils understand what bullying is and the harm it can do. We believe that adults can set an example in their own behaviour.

We hope that the ethos of the School will help to instil mutual respect and civilised behaviour, but we recognise that in our preventative approach to bullying we should provide pupils with the opportunity to discuss the topic at least once a year in tutorial work.

We will also ensure that every pupil knows where, when and to whom they can talk about any bullying incidents. This may be staff at School or parents at home. Pupils must feel confident that talking to adults is the proper course of action if they witness or experience bullying.

If you discover that your child is being bullied do not encourage him or her to 'hit back'. It may be contrary to your child's nature and may be just what the bully wants. Emphasise to your child that there is nothing wrong with him or her and that he or she can be helped. Contact the School.

Incidents of bullying should be immediately referred to the Form Tutor. Senior staff may then be called in to help. Although the nature of the response will depend on the circumstances, we have a standard procedure to follow which does not necessarily involve punishment in the first instance. Staff are experienced and use tact and discretion in their follow-up.

The whole school community (parents, pupils, staff and ancillary staff) has a role to play in combating bullying. All pupils should be aware that there is no such thing as an innocent bystander and the School neither condones nor ignores bullying, while all adults should be familiar with this policy to avoid inappropriate action being taken. We should all be committed to ensuring that every pupil receives his or her education in a safe environment free from humiliation, oppression or harassment.

Bullying Policy - for Pupils

Bullying can ruin a pupil's school life and education, so we treat it with the utmost seriousness. It is a form of anti-social behaviour that has no place at The Venerable Bede School.

Bullying can take many forms: physical, psychological or verbal. It can affect the happiness and achievements of the victims, the on-lookers, and the bullies themselves.

The following advice has been suggested and approved by Venerable Bede School pupils:

Try to ignore the person who is attempting to bully you.

*Do **not** retaliate in a physical or verbal way. Walk calmly away from the situation.*

Tell someone what has been happening, even if you have been warned not to. You may go to any teacher, particularly your Form Tutor or Head of House, or your parents. They will want to know and to help.

Remember that there may be others being bullied so you will be helping them as well as yourself by talking about your experience.

*Do **not** blame yourself.*

Think whether you might have done anything to encourage the situation.

What to do if you see someone else being bullied:

Find a teacher possibly Form Tutor or Head of House) and explain what you have seen and heard.

*Do **not** just ignore bullying. Think about how you would feel in the victim's position. Remember that bullying doesn't go away by itself.*

*Make sure that you do **not** get involved in the bullying as an 'easy' option out of the situation.*

Find the peer mediators – other pupils can help you.

Use the anti-bullying website at the school.

Some advice on how to avoid being bullied:

Try not to be oversensitive to every comment. It may not be intended to be hurtful.

Be friendly. Friends help you avoid these situations.

Think positively about yourself. Be confident.

Don't make unpleasant remarks about anybody – even if you intend them as a joke.

Some advice on how to avoid being a bully:

Talk about problems, rather than taking them out on someone else.

Try to avoid confrontations: find some way and somewhere to cool down.

Remember, bullies are often people with their own problems who need help to change their behaviour. We all have a responsibility to make sure that bullying has no place at The Venerable Bede School.

Reviewed: Summer 2007

Leadership Link: Mr D Airey