Queenswood

Anti-Bullying Policy

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ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Policy Statement

Queenswood is committed to ensuring that all members of the School community, including boarders, day girls and staff, are able to work and learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment free from fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour which affects everyone and is unacceptable. It will not be tolerated. The School prevents bullying in so far as reasonably practicable by the implementation of this policy.

This policy recognises the DfE advice Preventing and Tackling Bullying. (2017)

Policy aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of this policy are:

- To provide a safe and caring environment for the whole School community;
- To demonstrate that the School takes bullying seriously and that it will not be tolerated;
- To take appropriate measures to prevent all forms of bullying both in School and during off-site activities;
- To ensure that there are no 'initiation ceremonies' intended to cause pain, anxiety or humiliation;
- To give unequivocal support to everyone who takes action to identify and protect those who might be bullied;
- To demonstrate to all that the safety and well-being of every member of the Queenswood community is enhanced by dealing positively with bullying;
- To promote an environment where it is not an offence to report cases of bullying;
- To promote positive attitudes in staff and pupils;
- To make it easy to report bullying including cyber bullying and bullying outside school. Records are kept and the effectiveness of approaches are evaluated and patterns are identified.

Definition of bullying

Bullying can be described as behaviour, repeated over time, which intentionally hurts another person or group, physically or emotionally. It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups and may cause psychological damage. Bullying can range from ostracising, name-calling, teasing, threats and extortion, through to physical intimidation and assaults on persons and/or their property. These acts may include actions or comments which are racist, or sexual/sexist, homophobic, or draw unacceptable attention to the religion, or culture, or any special educational needs and disability, or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape) of the victim or because a child is adopted or is a carer.

Cyber bullying

Cyber bullying can be defined as the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, to deliberately upset someone else. This includes through the electronic use of email, SMS text messages, photographs or social networking sites. It can be an extension of face-to-face bullying, with technology providing the bully with another route to harass their target. However, it differs in several significant ways from other kinds of bullying: the invasion of home and personal space; the difficulty in controlling electronically circulated

messages, the size of the audience, perceived anonymity, and even the profile of the person doing the bullying and their target. Cyber bullying is a form of bullying, although there are some particular features which set it apart from the general consideration of bullying.

- Impact - the scale and scope of cyber bullying can be greater than other types of bullying;
- Targets and Perpetrators – those involved may have a different profile to those usually associated with more traditional cases of bullying;
- Location – cyber bulling can take place anywhere and at any time of the day or night;
- Anonymity – through the very nature of how cyber bullying takes place, the perpetrator may choose, or be able, to remain anonymous;
- Motivation – some perpetrators may not be aware that what they are doing is bullying;
- Evidence - unlike other forms of bullying the target of the bullying will have evidence of its occurrence.

Examples of cyber bullying may include:
- Threats and intimidating messages sent via computers or mobile phones;
- Cyber-stalking – the repeated sending of unwanted texts or instant messages;
- Pupils who set up website pages and invite others to post derogatory comments about a pupil;
- Pupils who film fights or assaults and circulate them via mobile phones;
- Pupils who send insulting and vicious text messages or messages of a sexual nature ('sexting') which is an offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003;
- Pupils who post fake and/or obscene photographs of the victim on a social networking site.
- Cyber bullying is a form of emotional abuse, which is dealt with fully in the School's Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy.

Cyber bullying and the law

Although cyber bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws that can apply in terms of harassment as well as threatening and menacing communications. The police will be contacted if there is evidence to suggest the law has been broken. Pupils are entitled to their freedom of expression and respect for their private lives but they must not infringe the rights of others. Infringement includes, amongst other things:

- Libel and slander;
- Bullying;
- Harassment and victimisation;
- Incitement of hatred on racial, religious or homophobic grounds;
- Breach of confidentiality;
- Breach of copyright.

Roles and Responsibilities

Every member of staff has a responsibility to protect the pupils and other members of staff from acts of bullying. They must know and understand the policy and procedures, be vigilant and alert to any indications of bullying, and be scrupulous in dealing with and reporting any incident in accordance with the policy. However, in addition, there are key people with specific responsibilities for anti-bullying.

The Principal

The Principal is responsible to the Board of Governors for the effectiveness of Queenswood's anti-bullying policy, strategies and procedures. This is covered in her annual report to the Board on Safeguarding Children. In addition, she will:

- Determine the strategies and procedures for preventing or countering incidents of bullying;
- Ensure that all members of staff involved with a case of bullying have the opportunity to discuss strategies and review them;
- Discuss development of the strategies with Senior Management;
- Ensure appropriate training is available, and that staff know their legal responsibilities;
- Ensure that the School's anti-bullying procedures are brought to the attention of all staff, parents and pupils.

Child Protection Officer

The Deputy Head Pastoral, Mrs Anne Wakefield, is the Child Protection Officer with responsibility for co-ordinating the implementation of anti-bullying policy, strategies and procedures.

She will:

- Be responsible for the day-to-day management of the School's anti-bullying policy;
- Ensure that there are positive strategies and procedures in place to help both the bullied and those involved in bullying behaviour;
- Keep the Principal informed of any incidents;
- Arrange staff training to raise awareness in order to reduce the risk of bullying at times and in places where it is most likely;
- Determine how best to involve parents in the resolution of individual problems;
- Keep detailed records to see patterns and to evaluate the effectiveness of approaches adopted to deal with bullying;
- Follow up proven cases to check that bullying has not returned;
- Bring in specialised help when required;
- Ensure all pupils know how to report bullying inside and outside school.

Clearly, if wider child abuse is suspected, then the Safeguarding Children (Child Protection) Policy will apply and be invoked.

Where there are concerns about girls using the internet inappropriately, including for cyberbullying the Deputy Head Pastoral will work with the IT Network Manager to monitor the situation.

Signs of bullying

Pupils who are being bullied may display changes in their normal behaviour such as becoming withdrawn and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual or unauthorised absences or clinging to adults. In the classroom this may be manifested by a change in the individual's work pattern or a lack of concentration.

Seriousness of bullying

In addition to the examples of Signs of Bullying given above, the effects of bullying can lead to severe psychological damage or worse. Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.

Dealing with incidents

Initial Actions

When bullying, including cyber bullying both in and out of School, is suspected by, or reported to, a member of staff, that person should take notes and immediately pass the information to the Deputy Head Pastoral and Assistant Head Pupils and Progress or Head of Sixth Form, who will initiate an investigation to be conducted by an appropriate member of staff. The investigating member of staff will:

- Interview all the parties involved and maintain a record of these interviews;
- Inform the Principal and Deputy Head Pastoral immediately if there appears to be any racial or religious element to the bullying;
- Report his or her findings to the Assistant Head Pupils and Progress or Head of Sixth Form who will in turn keep the Deputy Head Pastoral fully informed;
- In the case of cyber bullying, advise the victim or victims not to retaliate or return messages but to preserve and record all evidence of the cyber bullying abuse including: the saving of all phone messages; the recording or saving-and-printing of instant messenger conversations; the printing or production of a screen-grab of social network pages;
- If images are involved, determine whether they might be illegal or raise child protection concerns. If so, immediately conform to the instructions laid down in Queenswood's Safeguarding Children (Child Protection) Policy.

If there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer any significant harm it must be treated as a Child Protection issue. Full details of procedures are found the Safeguarding Children (Child Protection) Policy.

The Assistant Head Pupils and Progress or Head of Sixth Form will:

- Inform staff directly involved with the day to day care of the bullied pupil including teachers, Tutors, Head of Year and pastoral staff;
- Determine an appropriate strategy and plan of action to combat the bullying;
- As agreed with the Principal or Deputy Head Pastoral consult with the parents or guardians of both the bullied and pupils involved in bullying behaviour;
- Determine appropriate sanctions to be applied to the pupils involved in bullying behaviour.

Bullied Pupils

Members of staff who are involved with the day to day care of pupils who have been bullied must offer them reassurance as part of the plan of action that will have been devised to combat the bullying. This plan of action, which will address the requirement for counselling advice and general support, will have been discussed with the pupil in consultation with her parents or guardian.

Pupils involved in bullying behaviour

Changing the attitude and behaviour of those involved in bullying behaviour will form part of the strategy and plan of action implemented by the School. This plan will address counselling advice, behaviour management and general support. However, the School recognises that appropriate sanctions will also have to be used against those involved in bullying behaviour.

Sanctions

Any of the School's formal punishments may be used against those involved in bullying behaviour as deemed appropriate. In serious cases, the Principal may consider suspension or indeed permanent exclusion. Once the person responsible has been identified, it is important that sanctions are applied and that the perpetrator is supported in trying to understand the need to change their attitude and behaviour. This is particularly important when dealing with examples of cyber bullying as the bully may not witness directly the effect their behaviour has had on the victim.

Pupils should also be made aware that particularly in cases of cyber bullying misconduct of this nature outside School will be subject to School discipline if the welfare of other pupils, or the culture or reputation of the School, is placed at risk.

In cases of cyber bullying, the misuse of the School's IT resources is subject to the School's disciplinary regime. Sanctions may include confiscation of mobile phones or restrictions on the use of the internet. Where there are concerns that a criminal act has been committed or that a pupil has been subject to child abuse, the matter may need to be referred to the police and/or children's services. Records of all incidents involving misuse of IT resources will be recorded either by the IT Network Manager (straight misuse) or the Deputy Head Pastoral (cases of bullying).

Use of Physical Restraint

Corporal punishment is never used but, in exceptional circumstances, physical restraint may be used to prevent a pupil from harming themselves, other people, or property. Minimum force would be used for the minimum length of time, in line with both the provisions contained in the Education Act 2006 and the School's Guidelines for the use of Physical Restraint.

Involvement of Parents

Parents, as well as staff and pupils, should be aware that Queenswood will not tolerate bullying, and adopts a proactive approach to combating it through the education of its pupils. Parents of both those who are being bullied and those involved in bullying behaviour will always be engaged with as part of the determination of appropriate solutions to the problem.

Bullying of Staff or by Staff

Any complaint of bullying by or of a member of staff should be reported immediately to the Principal.

Strategies for countering bullying

In countering bullying, every member of staff must adhere to these fundamental guidelines:

Never ignore any suspicion of bullying;
Do not make premature assumptions;
Listen carefully to all accounts;
Adopt a problem-solving approach;

The Deputy Head Pastoral keeps detailed records which allow patterns to be identified and evaluates the effectiveness of the approaches adopted and identifies patterns.

a) Education

Queenswood raises the awareness of the anti-social nature of bullying throughout the whole curriculum and especially through its PSHCEE programme, School Chapels, the School Council, House/Year group meetings and the use of tutorial time. Further reminders are provided, from time to time, in talks from visiting external speakers. This enables the discussion of differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice based language. It also ensures girls are aware of their role when they find themselves as bystanders. Girls are helped to understand what they may describe as 'banter' may in fact be bullying.

The promotion of respect between individual members of the School Community is incorporated within the Queenswood School Rules. Every girl has a copy within their School Planner. Bullying is specified as the first on the list of the activities which are strictly forbidden.

b) Training

The awareness of staff is raised through training.

c) Communication

The policy is communicated to parents, pupils and staff. Staff set an example along with older pupils.

d) Other guidance

Use of mobile phones and cameras by staff (see Staff Code of Conduct).
Use of mobile phones by pupils in schools (see Electronic and Social Media Policy and Acceptable Use of Technology Policy).
Guidance on parental and official photographs.
Use of computers and other devices in school, including filtering and monitoring of internet usage (see Electronic and Social Media Policy).
Age-appropriate information about grooming, internet sites containing violent or adult content, and sharing personal information/photographs is covered through PSHCEE.
Use of technologies to tease, bully or threaten is covered through PSHCEE (see also Electronic and Social Media Policy).
There is shared information, discussion and co-operation between teachers and parents.

Other related School policies and procedures

- Safeguarding Children (Child Protection) Policy
- Expulsion and Removal Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Electronic and Social Media Policy
- Rewards and Sanctions Policy
- Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy found in the Employment Handbook
- Guidelines for the Use of Physical Restraint
- Keeping Children Safe in Education