

Anti-Bullying Policy

November 2009 –

The Mission Statement of St. George's British International School states that the aim of the school is to fulfil the potential of each individual child. Integral to this is that all members of the school community show consideration for the dignity of others. SGBIS recognises that bullying is wholly unacceptable in any form whether physical, verbal, mental or in the form of cyber bullying. Its potential seriousness in causing psychological damage is fully recognised. Any pupil or parent with concerns in this matter is advised to address these to a member of staff which would normally be, in the first instance, that child's Class Teacher or Form Tutor. All such concerns will be taken seriously and investigated immediately.

Introduction

Bullying is a form of cruelty to children and as such it is unacceptable at St George's School. However, it is important to recognise that it does happen and we must all seek to create and promote a culture in which pupils are valued as people; a culture where bullying, when it occurs, is dealt with firmly and swiftly but with sensitivity.

Our *Behaviour and Discipline Policy* explains the bigger picture, but bullying is specifically any behaviour which is deliberately intended to hurt, intimidate, harm or exclude. Members of our school community are subject to bullying when actions are one or more of the following:

- deliberately hurtful
- intended to embarrass, intimidate, insult, harm or exclude a person or group
- repeated as a behaviour towards a person or group
- difficult for those subjected to them to defend themselves

Bullying can be:

- Emotional being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racial racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Disability because of, or focusing on, the disability or learning difficulty of a person
- Religious taunts, disrespectful comments or graffiti about a person's religion aimed to hurt
- Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic because of, or focusing on, the issue of sexuality
- Cultural taunts or disrespectful comments about a person's culture aimed to hurt
- Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber All areas of internet, such as email & internet chat room misuse
Mobile threats by text messaging & calls
Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera & video facilities

All the above involve **emotional** bullying and some **physical**, here is some more information

Emotional bullying is when a person is taunted, mocked, excluded from groups or the subject of hurtful and untruthful gossip and rumours. This may be verbal, written or via a cyber medium such as text messages or internet, including through social networking sites, chat-rooms and the use of sites such as MSN, Facebook, YouTube etc., or by any other means. Often those who engage in this form of behaviour do not consider it to be bullying, but consider it to be "a joke". If the victim does not find teasing or taunting funny, then it is not.

Physical bullying should not be seen merely in terms of a pupil being physically assaulted. It can include damage done to the victim's property, clothing or school work. Bullying can be both mental and physical as, for example, when a group of pupils gangs up against an individual or isolates them.

It is important to note that what might appear to be a bullying incident could be a straightforward fight and should be treated as such.

Why do bullies bully?

- A bully often comes from a background in which bullying is considered to be "normal" in some way.
- They may believe that they can get the respect of his peers by bullying.
- Frequently the only means by which they can feel superior is to dominate those whom they perceive to be weak.
- They often feel inadequate, unhappy and insecure – they themselves may need help. Research suggests that to regard bullying as a straightforward discipline problem is no longer acceptable.

Please remember:

- Pre-emptive discipline could make the problem worse. It could reinforce the bully's perception of his esteem among his peer group, and exacerbate his and their antagonism towards the victim. It is important that a bully is helped to see the hurt he inflicts on his victims and made to understand that his behaviour cannot be tolerated.
- In the long term if a bully is able to get away with his bullying he is likely to continue to bully in later life.

Who gets bullied?

It is important to state that anyone can be bullied but that no one deserves it. Whatever the reason, a victim must be helped and protected. They need to be assisted to develop the personal resources needed in order to overcome the difficulties being faced. Although the Bully may face sanctions (see below), it is also true that the Bully needs the School's support. The School will do everything it can to help the Bully deal with his/her own issues through our strong pastoral support structure.

Summary

Above all remember that the seriousness that is involved in causing psychological damage to others. This cannot be emphasised enough. Our attitude and actions involved with bullying link with our general school *Behaviour and Discipline Policy*. See that policy for more information.

The Junior schools and the Senior school share the above common understanding and goals. However, the reality is that the detail is different. So, at this point in our policy, we will split into the two levels.

Junior School Anti-Bullying Policy Detail

If you are aware of an incident of bullying, please share with the Head of Junior School immediately. Pupils would normally tell their class teacher, but are encouraged to tell any member of staff or adult.

1 The role of the Head of the Junior School

- 1.1 The Head ensures that all teaching staff are aware of and understand how to implement this policy.
- 1.2 The Head ensures that all children know that bullying is wrong, and that it is unacceptable behaviour. The Head draws the attention of children to this fact at suitable moments. For example, if an incident occurs, the Head may decide to use assembly as a forum in which to discuss why that behaviour was wrong.
- 1.3 The Head and members of the teaching staff work hard to create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and understanding within the school. We believe that when children are valued and belong to a friendly and welcoming school, bullying is far less likely to be part of their behaviour.

2 The role of the teaching staff

- 2.1 Teaching staff in our school take all forms of bullying seriously, and aim to prevent incidents from taking place. Please see the *Behaviour and Discipline Policy* for more general expectations for the

teachers.

- 2.2 If, as teaching staff, we become aware of any bullying taking place, we deal with the issue immediately, by speaking directly to the children involved, in the case of an isolated incident which we witness and informing the Head of our concerns following evidence we have gained and logged in our Class Files, by talking with the children and/or their parents, or simply through suspicions we have formed by being vigilant and observant. The Head may also notice certain patterns of behaviour when reading the centralised Sanctions Records and will discuss this with relevant staff.
- 2.3 After consultation with the Head, the children's parents will be informed by the Head, and a record kept by the Head in a centrally stored electronic log.
- 2.4 Follow up action for both the victim and the perpetrator may involve counselling and support, it may also involve sanctions for the child who has carried out the bullying.
- 2.5 If a child is repeatedly involved in bullying other children, the Head will invite the child's parents into the school to discuss the situation. In more extreme cases, for example where these initial discussions have proven ineffective, the Head of the Junior School may suspend a pupil from school for a period of time or ultimately ask a pupil to leave the school. These measures will always be taken after consultation with the Principal.
- 2.6 Training is given in a variety of ways. Primarily it is cascaded from the Senior Management to the teachers. External training is also arranged in INSET days and residential courses.
- 2.7 The teachers are expected to use many educational avenues to explore bullying issues. For example, within English, PSHE, RE and assemblies.
- 2.8 The school operates a specifically designed programme to help the Bully realise the impact of their actions.

3 The role of parents

- 3.1 Parents who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, are encouraged to contact their child's class teacher immediately. We believe that problems may be solved more quickly if there is good communication between home and school.
- 3.2 Parents have a responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying policy and to actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the school.

Senior school anti-bullying policy

What can St George's do?

1) Create an Ethos of Empathy, Tolerance and Respect

- Our ethos must be one in which all members of the school community value each other – refer to IB learner profile and 'Every Child Matters' document.
- The way in which staff and pupils treat each other must reflect this ethos. No one should be humiliated or made to feel inadequate.

2) Staff must be vigilant and observant.

The School should be properly patrolled during break and lunch periods. Please see our *Behaviour and Discipline Policy* for more.

- At least one member of staff should be regularly present in each of Duty locations – please see the staff handbook for a list and description of *Duties*.
- All staff should be sensitive to changes in behaviour, moodiness, and patterned absenteeism.
- It is the responsibility of all staff to refer any pupil over whom problems may be sensed to the appropriate Tutor, Head of Year or Deputy Head. It is good practice to speak the person involved, but it is **MUST** be logged on the **Referral System**. It is essential that the school keeps a record.
- Training is given in a variety of ways. Primarily it is cascaded from the Deputy Head to the Heads of Years, tutors and teachers. External training is also arranged in INSET days and residential courses.

3) Create a “Be Prepared to Tell” Culture

In order to combat the culture of silence, a culture of being prepared to tell should be encouraged. This can be done in a number of ways:

- Opportunities will be taken to emphasise that any pupil being bullied should speak to his parent, Tutor, Head of Year, Deputy Head or any other trusted adult about it.
- Serious consideration will be given to the topic within the framework of peer group pressure in Personal and Social Education.
- Assemblies will, from time to time, focus upon it. All in all, there must be communicated an emphasis that not only is it right to tell, it is important to do so.
- We support this culture throughout our curriculum not only in PSHE. For example, in Citizenship, the pupils study Religious and Cultural tolerance. In English, challenging and thought-provoking books are chosen.

4) Who to tell

- Pupils: It is not always easy to report bullying. You can tell your tutor or **any** teacher that you are comfortable with. Thank you.
- Teachers: It is important that the report is put on the **referral system**. You should also speak to the Head of Year of both the victim and the bully.
- Parents: If you have concerns over your child, please contact the Tutor as soon as possible. If you concerns over another child, please contact the Head of Year, but the events following are likely to be confidential from you.

5) Sanctions available

Sanctions are used on an individual basis and range from simply talking to the pupils in question to detentions to temporary or permanent exclusion from the school. For a more in-depth discussion, please refer to the *Behaviour and Discipline Policy*.

Conclusion

The school has established pastoral procedures to deal with this issue. Pupils are encouraged to speak out about bullying. It is also stressed that onlookers to incidents of bullying can be seen as complicit. Addressing this issue is not something that individual teachers can do by themselves. The pupil's Tutor, Head of Year and the Deputy Head with responsibility for pastoral matters are all available to address this matter should it arise. All those involved will be given a fair opportunity to talk about the matter with an appropriate person. Incidents of bullying will be recorded and appropriate action will be taken. This might include a range of sanctions up to and including permanent exclusion from the school.

This policy will be updated September 2010 by the Deputy Head of Senior School and the Heads of Juniors.