

**Adopted by Full Governing Body on 28.01.2010**

# **WHITLEY BAY HIGH SCHOOL**

## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

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At Whitley Bay High School we strive to create 'a culture of mutual regard' \* in a Community in which everyone treats one another with respect and sensitivity.

Nevertheless, we recognise that sometimes individuals can fail to live up to this aim and, when things do go wrong, we must act quickly to put them right.

### **Definition**

Bullying can be defined as: an individual or group of individuals making another person or other persons frightened, upset or unhappy by physical, verbal, written or electronically mediated abuse in any form. Although not all reported incidents will necessarily fit into this definition, they will all be investigated speedily and seriously. If the bullying takes place out of school our options are limited, but if this bullying has repercussions in school, then we will investigate it as far as we are able and offer advice to students and parents about involving other agencies if this is appropriate.

### **Victims of bullying**

- If you feel able yourself, inform the bully that you feel that they are bullying you. If this would make you feel uncomfortable, ask a friend or teacher to tell the bully for you.
- Report cases of bullying to a member of staff in a confidential manner so that they can try to resolve the problem.
- If you feel uncomfortable approaching a member of staff, speak to a friend who could talk to a member of staff for you.
- Try not to retaliate when you are being bullied, as it could make the problem worse.
- Keep a log of incidents when you are being bullied and always report further problems if they occur after the matter has been dealt with.

### **Potential bully**

On some occasions you may not be aware that your behaviour is considered to be bullying. Below are some ways that can help you recognise when a person sees you as a bully:

- Be careful not to behave in a way that could offend or hurt someone.
- Stop if you can see that a person is becoming upset because of your actions.
- Listen if a person tells you that you are bullying them.
- Co-operate with members of staff who approach you with suspected cases of bullying.

## **Responsibilities of Students**

Students in this school need to help us to achieve our aim, through their own efforts. Below are some of the ways in which students can be of help:

- To be aware of the aims of the anti-bullying policy, and understand that no bullying behaviour will be tolerated.
- To be aware of situations around you, so you can identify bullying and support victims.
- To report any suspected case of bullying to a member of staff in the school.
- To work with members of staff to stop bullying.
- Be sensitive to other students' feelings; it is the perception of the victim that matters most in these incidents.
- Never get involved in any texting activity, online social networking or other new technology activities which might be perceived as cruel or unkind to others – even in a spectator capacity.

## **Responsibility of Members of Staff**

Members of staff have responsibilities to recognise and try to solve any bullying problems in the school, by doing the following things:

- To tolerate no bullying behaviour in any form.
- To work with students, parents and other staff to resolve any occurrences of bullying that arise.
- To recognise and report any signs of distress in students that could be a sign of bullying.
- To listen carefully to any students with a bullying related problem and report all incidents of bullying to the appropriate Head of Year.
- To take appropriate action when necessary, but only after consulting the victim and gaining their consent.
- To understand the sensitivity of the situation and take care not to cause further problems, in the course of their action.
- To make sure that victims of bullying are kept fully consulted and informed about what actions have been taken.
- To keep a detailed log of bullying incidents and actions taken so that patterns of activity can be tracked.

## **Responsibilities of Parents**

Parents can often recognise changes to their child due to bullying. Parents can help the school by:

- Being aware of the aims of the anti-bullying policy and understanding that no bullying behaviour will be tolerated.
- Reporting any suspected cases of bullying to a member of staff in the school preferably the child's Head of Year.
- Cooperating fully with the school to resolve any bullying problems.
- Encouraging their child never to take part in any sort of bullying behaviour.

- Understanding the sensitivity of the situation and taking care not to cause further problems by their actions.
- Being highly vigilant about bullying using new technologies and closely monitoring their child's use of phones, social networks and other online media.

### **Investigating and Recording Cases of Bullying**

- The investigating adult should obtain written accounts of events from both the victim and the bully.
- Parents should be informed of the situation, and possibly invited to discuss the problem, unless the sensitivity of the situation or feeling of the victim prevent this from being necessary.
- The form tutors of both victim and bully should be informed of the situation.
- A course of action should be agreed with the victim to resolve the problem.
- Once an incident has been dealt with, support mechanisms need to be set in place for both victim and bully.
- A specific date for reviewing the situation should be set with both the bully and victim to monitor future behaviour and aim to resolve any ongoing problems.
- All documentation on incidents of bullying should be placed in individual student files by the Head of Year and reported to Mr Clark, in charge of pastoral matters, who will keep a central bullying log of reported incidents and the students involved.

The course of action will involve securing the agreement of the victim for whatever form it takes.

Normally, the bully will be interviewed and, if the bullying is confirmed by the teacher, she/he will be warned that it must cease. Any subsequent proof of failure to cease will result in the possibility of sanctions, up to and including exclusion from school. Parents must understand that experience tells us that the best way to prevent further incidents of bullying is by educating bullies about the harmfulness of their actions rather than by giving them punishment such as detentions. The school will, in most circumstances, devote considerable time to meeting with the bully to discuss the impact of their bullying behaviours. This takes time but ultimately has proved to be very effective. Furthermore, we acknowledge that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

\* The Steer Report, The Report of the Practitioners' Group on School Behaviour and Discipline, 2005.