

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY – November 2017

RATIONALE

LAUDE The Lady Elizabeth School is completely opposed to bullying and does not tolerate it. Bullying is contrary to the values and principles we live by. All members of the school community have the right to work in a safe and caring environment. They also have a responsibility, in whatever way they can, to protect and maintain that environment.

DEFINITION AND TYPES OF BULLYING

There is no set or legal definition of bullying. This is what we understand bullying to be:

Bullying behaviour is deliberate and repeated hurtful aggression, verbal, physical or psychological, conducted by an individual or a group against any person who does not have the power to stop it.

There is a difference between bullying behaviour and what can be described as isolated or one-off incidents of interpersonal conflict.

Bullying can take many forms. It may be:

- **Face-to-face** such as fighting, pushing, taunting, insulting, embarrassing, intimidating and invading personal space, or **behind-the-back** such as writing threatening or offensive messages or graffiti
- Done **individually** for example by a person mocking or teasing someone, or **as a group** by means of social exclusion
- **Physical** such as hitting, kicking or spitting, or **psychological** such as spreading untrue and hurtful rumours.

Cyber-bullying is bullying carried out via Internet-based modern technologies and social media.

Cyber-bullying can be particularly damaging because:

- it can, under certain circumstances, be carried out with relative anonymity
- it has the capacity to hurt or humiliate a person in front of a huge 'audience'
- the bully is not always aware of the extent of the harm being caused because cyber-bullying is seldom done face-to-face
- the bullying situation can escalate rapidly as more people get involved
- it does not stop at the end of the school day, and can reach the victim in his/her own home and private space

The school does not allow the use of mobile phones during the school day in Years 7 to 11, nor the use of school computers for private purposes. However, even if cyber-bullying is carried out while not at school, the school will intervene if it relates to school matters or in any way brings the school into disrepute.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU BECOME AWARE OF A BULLYING SITUATION?

If you are a victim of bullying:

- **TELL SOMEONE.** Speak to a responsible adult who has the capacity to help, such as:
 - a parent or other relative
 - a teacher, tutor, the Head of Pastoral Care, or other senior teacher
 - the school nurse
 - a senior pupil
- There can be a reluctance to report bullying because of a fear of being labelled as a 'tell-tale'. In fact, you are behaving courageously and responsibly to stop bullying and will be supported both by the school and by other pupils.
- There is also a fear that reporting bullying might make the situation worse. This is understandable, but almost always not true. If you do nothing, you are surrendering your power to the bully. If you report the bullying behaviour, the school will intervene in a way which protects you.

If you are a witness of bullying:

- **DON'T BE A BYSTANDER** – by standing by passively, you are guilty of allowing the bullying to continue and grow.
- Intervene to protect the pupil who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so
- Report the witnessed instance of bullying to a responsible adult, or support the victim of bullying in doing so.

If you are the parent of the victim of bullying:

- **PARTNER** with the school in solving the bullying problem
- Inform the school (via your child's tutor or any senior teacher), of the suspected bullying, where possible with written notes or screenshots of the bullying situation
- Avoid premature judgement and be patient – sometimes the 'facts' reported by your child will turn out, on investigation by the school, not to be accurate. The school is committed to investigating a bullying allegation in a thorough and fair manner which protects the rights of all involved – this may take time. It is important to allow the school to look into the matter, rather than challenging the bully directly, or the parents of the bully.

If you are a teacher who becomes aware of a bullying situation:

- **LISTEN** to any pupil who reports bullying, take what he/she says seriously, reassure the pupil that the matter will be investigated and that he/she will be protected, **make notes and report** the complaint to the pupil's tutor and/or the Head of Pastoral Care
- Challenge immediately any instance of bullying behaviour which you witness anywhere in school, and report it to tutor and/or Head of Pastoral Care if necessary.

WHAT WILL THE SCHOOL DO IN CASES OF BULLYING?

The school will **investigate** all suspected cases of bullying fairly and thoroughly, including by taking written statements from the victim, the alleged bully and any witnesses. Depending on the severity of the bullying, the instance may be investigated by tutor, Key Stage Coordinator, Head of Pastoral Care or other senior teacher. **Written notes** will be kept. Parents who have reported bullying will be kept informed of the progress of the investigation.

Depending on the results of the investigation, the school will **take action to resolve** the bullying situation. This might include:

- talking with the victim of bullying and suggesting strategies to avoid a recurrence of the bullying situation, including the possibility of mentoring support from other pupils in the same or a higher year group. Making it clear that the victim of bullying must report any further instances of bullying immediately
- talking with the bully, making it clear that bullying behaviour is unacceptable, giving the bully a warning or sanction in accordance with the school's discipline policy. Making it clear that any repetition of bullying behaviour will lead to serious consequences.
- bringing both parties together to explore a working solution to the bullying situation, including the possibility of changing classes or tutor groups so as to separate them.
- informing the parents of one or both parties, or inviting them in for a meeting.
- suggesting counselling or psychological support for either party.
- in the case of severe bullying which might constitute an assault, or cyberbullying which breaks the law, involving the police.
- if the bullying persists, imposing a more severe sanction on the bully, including suspension or, at the discretion of the Headmaster and as a last resort, expulsion.

The school will continue to **monitor** the situation for a reasonable period following the bullying situation, making it clear that the victim of bullying should report any reoccurrence of bullying immediately.

HOW DOES THE SCHOOL DISCOURAGE BULLYING?

The school is committed to providing an educational environment in which the pupils feel valued, safe and happy. Incorporated into the school's teaching ethos are positive values of respect, friendship and tolerance and empathy.

The methods used by the school to discourage bullying will vary from time-to-time, with new initiatives being introduced as appropriate. They include, but are not limited to:

- making sure that all members of the school community are aware of this anti-bullying policy, know what bullying is and what to do in cases of bullying
- Promoting a bully-free environment in assemblies, tutor lessons, PSHE and Citizenship lessons
- Carrying out an annual anti-bullying survey, analysing the results and comparing them with previous years in order to inform the anti-bullying policies
- Ensuring effective pastoral support for all pupils through tutors, Key Stage Coordinators and senior staff
- Having a team of senior pupils who support the school's anti-bullying policy and who are approachable by any pupil, including during mentoring sessions
- Training staff to detect bullying behaviours, intervene in bullying situations and model positive values of tolerance and empathy.
- Reviewing this anti-bullying policy from time to time in order to ensure that it remains effective and relevant.

Any member of the school community who would like to suggest an improvement in the way bullying is discouraged is welcome to send their suggestions to the Head of Pastoral Care.

November 2017