



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY & PROCEDURES

Policy approved by Community Committee on 8th November 2023, to be reviewed in 2024. Policy created in line with 'Preventing and tackling bullying' (Department of Education July 2017)

Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School affirms the basic entitlement of all young people to receive their education free from humiliation, oppression and abuse. The governing body and staff of the school have a zero tolerance to bullying and have instituted procedures to prevent and manage incidents of bullying. Bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals. It can be a barrier to their learning and have serious consequences for their mental health. Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School is committed to creating a safe and disciplined environment where all students are able to learn and fulfil their potential.

There is no legal definition of bullying. However, it is usually defined as behaviour that is:

- Repeated
- Intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally
- Often aimed at certain groups - for example, because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation

It is recognised that all schools are likely to have a problem with bullying at some time. The school regards all bullying as serious and the aim of this policy is to help provide students with a safe and secure working environment, through the provision of a consistent and timely response by the school to any bullying incidents that may take place.

Prevention is the school's priority and there are processes in place for awareness-raising about bullying for students, parents and staff. All school staff will, wherever possible, intervene to prevent bullying incidents from taking place. The school will encourage students to report any incidents of bullying to a teacher or other responsible person. Staff will not ignore bullying or suspected bullying.

The school is committed to equal opportunities and staff are alert to the possibilities of sexist, racist and homophobic bullying. Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are particularly vulnerable to bullying. Members of school staff are alert to changes in behaviour and ensure that there are opportunities and established methods for children with SEND to communicate their concerns should the need arise.

The school will work in partnership with parents in dealing with bullying. Parents and carers will be informed of incidents and involved in discussions. Parents, carers and families are often the first to detect signs of bullying and the school will encourage parents who suspect that a student is bullying or being bullied to immediately contact the school and make an appointment to see the student's Head of Year as soon as possible.

The school will monitor the extent of bullying and the impact of its anti-bullying policy. All incidents of bullying will be recorded in the central Bullying Log, along with the school's response. This information is shared annually with the governing body.

Definitions

'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (DfE July 2017), defines bullying as, 'behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.' Bullying is deliberately harmful behaviour over a period of time. One-off incidents, whilst they may be very serious and must always be dealt with, may not fall within the definition of bullying.

The widespread access to social media has provided a new medium for online bullying which can occur in or outside school. Online bullying can happen at all times of the day and it has some very specific features:

- it invades both home and personal space
- the size of the audience can be vast
- messages/information/pictures circulated online can be difficult (if not impossible) to control
- the bully can feel relatively anonymous
- it can have a large number of 'bystanders'
- the bullying may take place out of school

PROCEDURES FOR IDENTIFYING AND MANAGING BULLYING

Recognising the signs of bullying

Staff will watch out for the signs and symptoms of the following forms of bullying:

- physical
- verbal
- indirect, e.g. spreading rumours or social exclusion
- online bullying – in particular the misuse of mobile phones and social media

The school recognises that any student can be bullied but certain factors that can make bullying more likely are:

- a lack of close friends in the school
- shyness
- race, religion, sexual orientation or social class
- a disability or some other obvious difference, e.g. stammering, size or acne

Staff may suspect bullying is occurring if a student:

- becomes withdrawn and anxious
- shows a deterioration in academic work
- starts to attend school erratically
- has spurious illnesses
- persistently arrives late at school
- prefers to stay with adults

Dealing with allegations of bullying

Any incidents of bullying will be taken seriously and dealt with as quickly as possible. This includes incidents of bullying and online bullying which take place outside of school. Staff will do all they can to support the victims of bullying and make it clear to the bully that this behaviour is not acceptable. In dealing with allegations of bullying, staff will:

- listen to the student's account of the incident
- not make premature assumptions
- listen to all accounts of the incident
- reassure the student that reporting the bullying incident was the right thing to do
- make it clear to the student that he or she is not to blame for what has happened
- make a note of what the student says
- adopt a problem-solving approach that encourages students to find solutions rather than simply justify themselves
- explain that the student should report any further incidents to a teacher or other member of staff immediately
- make regular follow-up checks to ensure that the bullying has not resumed

Dealing with Online bullying Incidents

If the student responsible for the bullying is identified, their behaviour will be addressed in relation to the school's Behaviour Policy. The following sanctions might be implemented, depending upon the nature and severity of the bullying:

- confiscating equipment such as mobile phones within school
- withdrawing access to the school internet for a set period of time
- limiting use of the school internet for a set period of time
- contacting the police, where the online bullying is sufficiently severe
- informing external agencies

Dealing with serious bullying

If the student(s) responsible for the bullying is identified, their behaviour will be addressed in relation to the school's Behaviour Policy. The following sanctions might be implemented, depending on the nature and severity of the bullying:

- be removed from the peer group
- lose break or lunchtime privileges
- be put in detention or isolation
- be banned from a school trip or sports event where these are not an essential part of the curriculum
- be excluded for a fixed period of time
- be permanently excluded - if behaviour poses an ongoing and extreme threat

to the safety and well-being of other students

How students should report bullying

Speak to a member of staff - this could be your form tutor, Head of Year or any adult you feel comfortable speaking with. You can also email any member of staff, post a note in the post box in the south vestibule or use the REPORT form on your year group google classroom.

Advice to students

The school will advise students who are involved in physical or verbal bullying incidents to:

- stay calm if possible
- be firm and clear, look the bully in the eye and tell them to stop
- get away from the situation as quickly as possible
- tell an adult what has happened immediately

The following advice will be given to those experiencing cyberbullying:

- do not retaliate or reply
- block or remove offenders
- review the information you are giving out
- make sure you tell an adult
- try to keep calm and do not let the bully see a reaction
- retain any evidence (e.g., screen shots, text messages) until it has been seen by an adult

Supporting students who have been bullied

Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School takes responsibility for ensuring that support is provided for students who have been bullied. The nature and level of support will depend on the individual circumstances and the level of need. This might include mentoring from the Form Tutor or Head of Year, support from the School Counsellor, working with parents and referring to relevant professional organisations.

The school recognises that in some more serious circumstances, the consequences of bullying may lead to very severe social, emotional or mental health difficulties. Provision will be made to support these students – through school support networks or through referral to appropriate professional organisations.

Helping the bullies to change

Staff will spend time helping students who have bullied others to change their behaviour. If a student is bullying others, staff will:

- talk to the student and explain that bullying is wrong and makes others unhappy
- discuss with the student how to join in with others without bullying
- talk to the student about how things are going at school, his or her progress and friends
- give the student lots of praise and encouragement when he or she is being kind and considerate to others

Awareness-raising for students

There are a number of opportunities within the curriculum to help children 'stay safe' – through core subjects and PSHE. At the beginning of the school year, all classes will discuss safe use of ICT during their first lesson.

The school has its own Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) that clearly identifies how the ICT suite and internet should be used. Students and parents are reminded of this policy annually. Some of the main features are as follows:

- students should be made aware of their own responsibility in reporting anything they identify that causes them concern
- permission must be given from parents for students to use the internet and students must also agree to follow internet usage rules

If an issue relating to bullying has arisen, the subject may be discussed during lessons and form time and school assemblies.

Awareness-raising for parents

Parents are invited to discuss any concerns or questions they may have about bullying and the school's anti-bullying strategies. Parents are encouraged to take notice of their children's online activities and to discuss the risks with them. Regular updates are provided for parents, outlining the school's approach to online safety and online bullying, and providing information that offers additional support and advice.

Awareness-raising for school staff

Bullying is discussed regularly as an agenda item at Head of Year meetings. This enables new developments of potential sources of bullying to be raised and possible ways of challenging these to be discussed. New terminology used by the students may also be shared at these sessions.

Bystanders

The issue of being a bystander or accessory to bullying is addressed with all students regularly. Students are encouraged to respect other people on and offline and to recognise how sharing a secret, forwarding messages, passing on numbers and passwords and contributing to social media discussions can cause harm and distress to others.

Safeguarding

When there is a reasonable cause to suspect that a student is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, a bullying incident will be addressed as a Child Protection concern, under the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004.

Signed _____
(*Chair of Governors*)

Date