



ARNOLD  
HOUSE  
SCHOOL

Arnold House School  
**BULLYING**  
**POLICY**

**REVIEW DATE: JUNE 2024**

# BULLYING

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**Reviewers: SS/CK/VM**

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## **The legal context**

- Schools are required by law to have a bullying policy.
- School inspections are required to scrutinise the actions being taken by a school to challenge and reduce bullying.

This policy is based on guidance contained in the following documents:

- *The Equality Act 2010*. The Duty has three aims:
  - To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
  - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
  - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- *The Children Act 1989* – a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is ‘reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm.’
- *Preventing and Tackling Bullying, Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies*, DfE, July 2017
- *Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff*, November 2014
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, DfE, September 2024

## **What is bullying?**

**Definition:** Bullying can be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour of any kind, physical or emotional, by an individual or group, usually repeated over a period of time. The school recognises that bullying can take a variety of forms, including cyberbullying. It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability, or because a child is adopted or is a carer. A key characteristic of bullying is that it involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim which can manifest itself in several ways: it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by being denied access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online. Bullying is a safeguarding issue and this policy should be read in conjunction with the school’s Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy. In short, bullying:

- is deliberate and designed to be hurtful, intimidating and upsetting
- often occurs repeatedly over a period of time – it is important to consider when bad behaviour becomes bullying – if someone hurts you verbally and/or physically and this is the first - is this still bullying?
- is directed at the same individual or individuals
- involves an imbalance of power or authority

The main types of bullying are:

- **Physical** (hitting, kicking, theft and/or destruction of property)
- **Emotional** (name calling, teasing, threats and extortion, racist remarks, possibly leading to psychological damage)
- **Indirect/emotional** (spreading rumours, excluding someone from social groups)
- **Cyberbullying** (text-message bullying, phone-call bullying, picture/video-clip bullying, aka Happy Slapping (via mobile phone cameras), mail bullying, chat-room bullying, bullying through instant messaging, bullying via websites, social media or sexting)

Bullying of any kind is totally unacceptable and will be taken very seriously. If bullying is suspected boys should be confident that their voice will be heard and that the circumstances will be investigated thoroughly. This means that any boy or parent who suspects that bullying may be taking place should speak to a Form Teacher/Tutor or Year Head in the first instance. A suspected case of bullying can be brought to the attention of staff by anyone in the school community: boy, parent or member of staff.

### **Signs and symptoms of bullying**

Staff must be aware of these possible signs and should investigate if a boy:

- is unwilling to attend school
- regularly feels ill in the morning
- starts to fall behind in his school work
- returns home with damaged possessions
- has possessions which 'go missing'
- has unexplained bruises/cuts
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- becomes nervous about using any form of cyber communication
- does not wish to travel to Canons Park
- becomes anxious, withdrawn, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- appears isolated and avoids interacting with others during breaktime/lunch/outside classroom.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems but bullying should be considered a possibility and must be investigated.

### **Staff responsibilities**

Staff and boys must work together to create a happy and caring school environment. It is everyone's responsibility to try to keep Arnold House free from bullying and to deal with any incidents, should they arise, quickly and effectively. In particular all staff are required to:

- watch for early signs of distress in the boys
- be vigilant when on duty and not tolerate any inappropriate behaviour (physical, verbal or indirect) either inside or out of the classroom
- share concerns during split/split meetings or speak to the Deputy Headmaster or Director of Citizenship
- Listen, Investigate, Consider Best Course of Action, Act when a boy tells them of inappropriate behaviour.
- In the Pre-Prep a conflict resolution approach enables children to give an account uninterrupted with everyone listening, The focus is on an agreed solution going forward. Most children require support to manage their social relationships.
- Records are kept and parents involved where there are repeated concerns or if there is a one-off serious incident.

### **Action available to staff after witnessing or suspecting a case of bullying**

The following is a list of actions available to staff depending on the perceived seriousness of the situation. The emphasis is always on a caring, listening approach:

- Talk with the alleged victim: **Listen, Investigate, Consider Best Course of Action, Act.**
- Pass on your concerns to the relevant Form Teacher/Tutor and Head of Year in the first instance.
- If there is reasonable cause to suspect that a boy is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, staff should follow the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and report their concerns to the DSL, Elena Gregoriou-Ostojic, Susie Dart, Victoria McKenzie and Kelly-Ann Brennan, Deputy Safeguarding Leads, or in exceptional circumstances directly to Westminster Children's Services. Anybody can make a referral. If the boy's situation does not appear to be improving, the staff member with concerns should press for re-consideration. Concerns should always lead to help for the boy at some point.

### **Response to a concern relating to a suspicion of bullying made by a parent, boy or member of staff**

Regardless of which member of staff is approached in the first instance it is essential that the Form Teacher/Tutor is informed at the earliest opportunity. The Form Teacher/Tutor informs the Head of Year and together they will investigate. At this stage investigations are ongoing and bullying behaviour has yet to be confirmed.

- The boys will be monitored for a period of time.
- An appropriate recording system/chart to record patterns of behaviour from lesson to lesson and during break time and activities could be used where appropriate. This would be monitored by the Form Teacher/Tutor and by the Head of Year. The Head of Year will keep the Deputy Headmaster and Director of Citizenship abreast of progress and of any issues.
- Where appropriate, the Head of Year may call separate meetings with the parents of the boys involved to discuss the concerns raised and inform them of the actions the School has taken or is considering.
- If necessary, a time frame will be set for further meetings with the parents concerned to discuss, review and modify the actions taken (if any) and the outcome for the boys involved.
- The Head of Year will discuss their findings with the Director of Citizenship.

### **Procedure once the Headmaster and Director of Citizenship have confirmed that a case of bullying has occurred:**

- Parents of the boy/boys who have been bullying will be notified and invited into school to meet with the Headmaster and Director of Citizenship.
- Sanctions available for a boy who has been bullying include: suspension, withdrawal from favoured activities and loss of playtimes.
- All staff who have contact with the boy/boys confirmed to have been bullying will be made aware of the problem and asked to report back to the Head of Year, Senior Master and Director of Citizenship. immediately if they observe any further inappropriate behaviour.
- A boy who has been bullying should genuinely apologise to the victim and a reconciliation should take place. The apology/reconciliation should also be followed up in writing as deemed appropriate by the Headmaster.
- The behaviour of the boy who has been bullying will be monitored by the Director of

Citizenship, through the Conduct Penalties and close liaison with Year Heads and Form Teachers/Tutors for a specified period to ensure there is no repetition of bullying behaviour. Review of the boys' behaviour will also take place in split/split and pastoral group meetings.

- The Director of Citizenship will keep the Headmaster abreast of progress and developments.
- The parents of the boy confirmed to have been bullying will be kept informed of progress and the School will ensure that there is a dialogue between the parents and the School.
- A boy who has been bullied will be supported by staff in the School, and his parents will be kept informed.
- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the School's approach will take place after each case where necessary and the Bullying Policy amended accordingly; this can be reviewed in Pastoral Team meetings

## Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying poses particular problems for schools for the following reasons:

- It can take place at any time, at school, at home and intrudes into spaces that had previously been regarded as safe or personal.
- The audience is very large and can be reached very quickly. Electronically forwarded content is hard to control and may resurface making it difficult for the target of the bullying to move on.
- The cyberbully can attempt to remain anonymous and does not have to be in the same physical space as their target.
- Sometimes cyberbullying is unintentional. Negative online comments, even as a joke, about a friend or another pupil who is not intended as a recipient can be forwarded to others and can be interpreted as very offensive and hurtful.

Through assemblies, visiting speakers and within the IT curriculum, and the PSHE curriculum the School attempts to educate the boys to be aware of the risks that IT and social media carries in relation to bullying. Emphasis is placed on:

- respect for others: **If you wouldn't say it to someone's face, don't say it online**
- **think before you send.** Whatever is sent can be made public very quickly and could stay online indefinitely
- learning how to block bullies or report someone who is behaving badly
- **don't retaliate or reply**, as this could implicate you
- how to save evidence of offending messages, pictures or online conversations
- telling an adult you can trust.

Pupils in Years 5-8, staff and parents are invited to attend sessions with an external agency every two years to learn how to protect themselves online and about social media and its link to cyberbullying.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 affords a Head powers 'to such an extent that is reasonable' to regulate the conduct of pupils when they are off site. This act also provides the school the right to confiscate items such as mobile phones from pupils. The Headmaster will use these powers whenever necessary to investigate/uncover incidents of cyberbullying even when these occur outside school hours; in the evening, at weekends or in the school holidays. An incident of suspected bullying that takes place outside normal school hours but is brought to the attention of the School becomes a school issue.

Parents are encouraged to print a copy of offensive and abusive comments made on Facebook and other social media sites and pass it to the Director of Citizenship in the first instance.

**The Director of Citizenship supported relevant Head of Year, is responsible for:**

- supervising and monitoring incidents of alleged/confirmed bullying

- liaising with staff and parents
- keeping records of alleged or confirmed incidents, and of meetings about such incidents
- monitoring the effectiveness of the School's strategy.

The Bullying Policy is reviewed annually and there is a focus once a year in Form Time and assemblies on bullying – what it looks like and what can be done to minimise incidents in school.

### **Proactive approaches to reduce incidents of bullying**

Raising awareness about bullying takes place regularly through:

- Assemblies (used throughout the School) – where boys are reminded that if they see or hear of bullying or feel bullied themselves, they should:
  - speak to the suspected bully,
  - a teacher
  - their parents
- discussion during Form Time/ Circle Time (EYFS)
- aspects of the curriculum, as appropriate
- annual anti-bullying week/ Kindness Week (EYFS)
- visiting speakers for staff, boys and parents in relation to cyber-bullying and online safety
- School ethos
- Code of Conduct
- the giving of praise and rewards for kind actions and considerate behaviour
- listening to ideas and proposals put forward by pupils – for example from the School Council
- reminding all staff that they have a pastoral responsibility whatever their role or title, and that they must follow-up any concerns with a boy's Form Teacher/Tutor or Assistant Form Teacher/Tutor and Head of Year in the first instance
- the Headmaster reminds the boys every year in Anti-Bullying Week about Edmund Burke's quote "All it takes for evil to prosper is for good men to stand by and do nothing"
- remind parents once a year to read the Anti-Bullying Policy.

### **Useful websites (several include free resources)**

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)  
[www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying)  
[www.bullyfreezone.co.uk](http://www.bullyfreezone.co.uk)  
[www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk) 5  
[www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)

### **Related Arnold House policies**

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- Good Behaviour and Sanctions for Misbehaviour
- E-Safety
- PSHE policy and schemes of work
- Mental Health Policy

Sebastian Stones, Director of Citizenship  
 Chris Kerr, Senior Master  
 Vicky McKenzie, Head of Pre-Prep

Last reviewed: June 2024