

Anti-Bullying Policy 2024-25

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Policy Contact: William Yates, Senior Deputy Head

Anti-Bullying Policy

Introduction

1. Seaford College is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all students so that they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere, without feeling in any way intimidated by the behaviour of others. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and all staff should seek at all times to confront bullying behaviour. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all students should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a telling school. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell staff.

2. All staff (September 2024) have been issued with a copy of the DfE booklet *Preventing and Tackling Bullying (July 2017)*. Seaford College complies with the Equality Duty, part of the Equalities Act (2010).

What is bullying?

3. Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both children who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

In order to be considered bullying, the behaviour must be aggressive and include:

- a. An Imbalance of Power: Children who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- b. Repetition: Bullying behaviours often happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once, but can also be an individual event.

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumours, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be, but is not restricted to:

- Emotional - excluding, tormenting (i.e. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Homophobic - because of or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Physical - punching, kicking, hitting, pushing or any use of physical violence
- Racist/Cultural - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber - unpleasant contact using Texting, Social Networking, e-mail, private messaging
- Disability - physical, emotional, academic, mental.
- Religious - creed, Traditions, clothing etc
- Special Educational Needs - unpleasant reference to any SEN issues

Why is it important to respond to bullying?

4. Bullying hurts. It can have severe, long-term, consequences for the victim. In extreme cases it can even lead to self-harm or suicide. Some types of bullying could be classed as criminal behaviour which could result in prosecution. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying.

Students who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. The College has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Objectives of this Policy

5. Objectives:

- All Governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, students and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All Governors and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All students and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a School we take bullying seriously. Students and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated and immediate action will follow any reported incident.
- Everyone ought to be aware that bullying might take place anywhere but is more likely in areas poorly supervised and during free time. Punctuality for duties is therefore paramount.

The school has an Anti-Bullying Policy for students which is reproduced below. In addition, the College has a Cyberbullying Policy, which defines cyberbullying as below:

‘Cyberbullying’

6. Cyberbullying is defined as the use of information and communications technology (ICT), particularly email, mobile phones, social media, private messaging and the internet, to deliberately upset someone else. It can take many forms, including threats, intimidation, harassment, belittling or cyberstalking by, for example, repeatedly sending unwanted messages or texts.

Bystanders

7. In cases of cyberbullying bystanders, or ‘accessories’ to the bullying, often have a more active role, e.g. forwarding messages or contributing to chat room discussions. Therefore, they may not have started the bullying they are active participants and often make the matter worse.

The College makes it clear to all students that bystanders have a key responsibility to the School community and to anyone they see being bullied or victimised. They are encouraged not to tolerate such behaviour and to stand up for what they know to be right, for example by telling a member of staff what they have seen or heard.’

Student Anti-Bullying Policy

8. At Seaford College we believe that every student has the right to enjoy the education on offer without having to endure any form of bullying. Bullying is contrary to the values and ethos of the College and will not be tolerated. Whilst it is difficult to give one precise definition of bullying, we regard bullying to be any behaviour by another individual or group which is intended to make another pupil unhappy or miserable and which results in pain or distress being caused to the victim, either emotionally or physically. This may be more than one specific incident or a sequence of more persistent incidents. It is our belief that all students should treat other students with dignity and respect at all times and that, in their behaviour towards others, they should always consider the effect this behaviour is likely to have.

Bullying of any kind is never acceptable at Seaford. All students should feel a sense of collective duty to both prevent bullying and to respond accordingly if they are aware that bullying is happening. Staff have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

It is important to stress that it is the perception of the victim and not the perpetrator that matters; too often perpetrators pass off their behaviour as banter.

Bullying can also lead to the psychological damage of the victim and although it is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.

Bullying can take a number of forms. These include the following:

- Verbal name calling, sarcasm, teasing, spreading rumours
- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting or any other form of violence
- Emotional being deliberately unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
- Religious mocking, ridiculing or tormenting someone because of their religious beliefs.
- Sexual unwanted sexual attention or sexually abusive written or verbal comments.
- Gender
- Cultural mocking, humiliating or tormenting a pupil because of their nationality or background (e.g. their accent, manners or appearance).
- Homophobic humiliating, ridiculing or tormenting because of their sexual orientation. Derogatory use of the word 'gay'.
- Racist racial taunts, gestures or written comments
- Disability making comments about obvious disabilities or in time about disabilities that become apparent, e.g. through learning difficulties.
- Cyber as defined above.
- Because a child is adopted or is a carer.

Signs and symptoms of bullying might include:

- Being frightened of travelling to or from school
- Not wanting to go on the school bus
- Change their usual routine
- Begging to be driven to school
- Unwilling to go to school
- Becoming anxious, lack of confidence and withdrawn

- Attempted or threatened suicide
- Crying themselves to sleep at night/nightmares
- Feeling ill in the mornings
- Truancing
- Beginning to do poorly at school
- Coming home with clothes/books torn
- Having possessions go 'missing'
- Asking for money or stealing money
- Continually losing pocket money
- Unexplained cuts/bruises
- Coming home hungry
- Becoming aggressive and unreasonable
- Bullying other children or siblings
- Giving improbable excuses to any of the above

9. Preventing bullying is central to the school's approach. To this end, the school undertakes to:
- encourage appropriate behaviour at all times, ensuring students know what is expected of them.
 - provide pupils with a copy of the Students' Behaviour Policy, including the top ten rules and expectations, which underline these expectations
 - include anti-bullying education at induction and as an integral part of the programme of personal, social and health education
 - raise awareness of bullying and regularly remind students of the nature of bullying and the need to ensure an anti-bullying culture pervades all areas of school life, e.g. by the use of assemblies etc.
 - educate students, especially boarders, that initiation ceremonies or physical punishments may be a form of bullying and are unacceptable.
 - Use the Student Council, the Boarders' Council and tutoring to raise awareness of the School's approach to bullying.
 - remind students of the role of bystanders in preventing bullying and emphasis that bystanders have a responsibility to intervene appropriately when they witness bullying.
 - ensure that staff and others, such as prefects, who are in positions of responsibility, are aware of the signs and symptoms of bullying and of how to respond.
 - As appropriate, invest in specialised skills and training to understand the needs of the pupils, including those with SEN or disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender pupils (LGBTQ+).
 - Discuss the idea of 'different but equal' and not, for example, defining a student by his or her colour, religion, disability or sexual orientation.

Reporting Bullying

10. The College recognises that students do not always wish to report bullying, but an open approach is encouraged and it is hoped that any student who is being bullied will seek help. Bullying can be reported, or help sought directly, from the following:

- A student's tutor
- Subject teaching staff or Learning Support Teacher
- The team in No 46
- Chaplain
- School Nurse

- Heads of Year, Assistant Head of Year, Boarding Housemaster
- Family at home who may then contact appropriate key staff

It may feel more appropriate to seek help from a senior student or prefect rather than a member of staff. The following senior students may be approached:

- Sixth Form Peer Listeners (identifiable through Pink Lanyard ID cards)
- College Prefects (identifiable through Gold Lanyard ID cards)
- House Prefects (Boarding Houses)

Whatever the circumstances, bullying is never acceptable, and it is vital that any victim of bullying feels supported and feels able to report the incident to an appropriate person.

How to respond to a bullying incident.

11. a. Report the incident immediately to any available, responsible person.
 - i. Suggested staff are to be found in the school calendar.
 - ii. College prefects may also be approached. They will then pass these on to one of the College staff.

- b. Childline numbers and external listeners' numbers are available on notice boards in boarding houses and Common Rooms, as well as in the School Calendar.

All disclosures will be treated confidentially. Any 'comeback' or 'reprisal' that results from a disclosure will be treated as severe bullying by the College and will not be tolerated.

12. Where the school becomes aware of a bullying incident, the school undertakes to respond appropriately. In all cases the aim of the response is to stop the bullying, to ensure that the bully understands why his/her behaviour is unacceptable and to aim to prevent any reoccurrence. Whilst the precise response will depend on the specific circumstances, the following general guidelines will apply:

- All reported instances of bullying will be taken seriously. In deciding how to proceed in a particular case, the school will listen carefully to the victim and discuss with him/her the preferred course of action.
- It is recognised that victims are often frightened to report bullying as they fear that the bully will retaliate by escalating the nature of the bullying. The school recognises this as typical of bullies and encourages pupils to be confident that the school will deal sensitively with any reported incident.
- All incidents will be investigated and all incidents will be recorded by staff. Where appropriate parents will be informed and may be asked to attend a meeting to discuss the incident.
- Students who are found to have been bullying will be encouraged to confront their behaviour and they will be offered help and guidance as to how to correct their behaviour. The motivation for their behaviour should be considered.
- If possible the students will be reconciled.
- Where bullying is identified - any student will risk exclusion at first offence. Persistence in bullying such as name calling, exclusion, sarcasm, teasing, spreading rumours or deliberately being unfriendly will also result in a student losing their right to remain in the school.

- Where bullying raises a concern for safeguarding, the designated members of staff for safeguarding will be informed, who will take the appropriate and necessary action.

Useful websites

13.

- Dept for Education Anti-Bullying information
- www.kidscape.org.uk
- www.bullying.org
- www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- www.bullyfreezone.co.uk
- www.bullying.co.uk
- www.beatbullying.org
- Childnet International
- www.restorativejustice.org.uk
- EACH Educational Action Challenging Homophobia

Bullying hurts. No-one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Students who bully need to learn to behave appropriately. All members of the School should take responsibility for supporting this seriously.

Guidance for Staff

14. Staff should at all times act as models of appropriate behaviour. In their dealings with students and with each other staff should not misuse their positions of power and they should at all times treat students and other staff with respect. Staff should be aware of the contents of the Safeguarding Policy and of their responsibilities towards all students in the school.

All staff should be prepared to listen to students when they wish to talk about bullying behaviour. It is crucial that students can trust staff to take their concerns seriously and to treat their concerns sensitively and with regard to their right of privacy. All staff should moreover seek to regularly reinforce the school's anti-bullying ethos.

While some students may report bullying, others may, for a variety of reasons, be unable to do so. Staff should, however, be on the lookout for signs and symptoms of a student being bullied. In particular, staff should be concerned if a student:

- becomes school phobic
- becomes withdrawn, anxious or loses confidence
- becomes unusually aggressive or disruptive
- changes his or her usual routine (for instance, stops going to the dayroom or to lunch)
- begins to perform poorly in schoolwork
- has regular illnesses / regularly reports to the medical centre
- has possessions which are damaged or continually 'misplaced'
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- starts to bully others
- refuses to discuss what is wrong

- seems afraid of or jumpy when answering a mobile phone or using the internet
- offers implausible excuses for any of the above.

None of the above necessarily indicates bullying, but bullying should be considered a possibility if any of the above occurs and the situation should be investigated.

Responding to Bullying

15. Where staff observe bullying behaviour they should in the first instance confront the bully and reinforce the school's attitude towards bullying. All staff should aim to confront any inappropriate behaviour, including teasing and name calling. Failure to do so may suggest to students that staff are giving their tacit approval to the behaviour.

Possible courses of action for Teachers:

16. **All cases of bullying, both physical and verbal must be reported to the Senior Deputy Head immediately, who will then inform the Headmaster.**

Depending on the maliciousness of the attack and the degree of premeditation, the action may lead to immediate exclusion of the perpetrator(s).

- In all cases of bullying (or alleged cases), the senior staff will attempt to ascertain:
 - What has actually transpired?
 - Was it malicious?
 - Was it organised as part of a longer term action?
 - Can it be dealt with through counselling or does it need stronger action?
- Depending upon the answers to the above questions, the action taken should vary between longer bouts of educative counselling, including videos on bullying, and (where the answer to II or III above is YES), a response equivalent to that proposed for physical bullying outlined above.
- Parents of the victim should be contacted at the earliest possible time. They should be assured that our aim will be an immediate full stop to the behaviour.**
- Parents of the bully should be contacted immediately. They must be informed of the serious nature of the allegations and that their child's behaviour might well result in exclusion, either temporary or permanent.**
- All incidents will be followed up and monitoring of the parties involved will continue for a period of time as deemed necessary.

Recording of Bullying Incidents

17. **All incidents must be reported to the Senior Deputy Head**
- These will be recorded in the College Bullying Log.
 - The whole staff will be made aware of ongoing incidents so that monitoring can be effective.

Guidelines for Tutors and Heads of Year

18. The following guidelines apply where there is a need to investigate an incident of reported bullying within a tutor group. Such an investigation would usually involve the Tutor and the appropriate Head of Year/Director conducting the investigation in the first instance, having first notified the Senior

Deputy Head. If in doubt about the appropriate procedure, reference should be made to the Senior Deputy Head. As a general rule we should in the first instance avoid using punishments to help resolve a problem.

1. **Interview the victim**

Take an account from the victim and really listen. The circumstances are not especially important but the effects are. Note down the feelings and allow the victim to express those at length. It is sometimes useful to get the victim to write down his or her feelings.

2. **Call a meeting of those involved in the bullying**

Where one or two students are the chief instigators of the bullying then include observers or those who collude by failing to intervene.

3. **Explain the problem**

Tell the group how the victim is feeling and emphasise his/her distress. Do not discuss the fine details or attribute blame.

4. **Share responsibility**

Do not attribute blame; state that you know that the members of the group are responsible people and can do something about it.

5. **Ask each member of the group to suggest a way in which the victim could be helped to feel happier.**

List all the ideas that emerge and leave it there.

6. **Pass the responsibility over to the group to solve**

About a week later see each group member individually to find out how things are going. You should also see the victim.

Throughout the process it is important to convey your belief that the students involved are not "bad", are capable of responsible and kind behaviour and that they will help the victim.

Follow Up

Tutors should check regularly that the bullying problem has been eradicated. Where it persists the Tutor should inform the Head of Year who should consult the Senior Deputy Head. Depending on circumstances they should consider punitive action.

Key to success in tackling bullying

19. Keys to success in tackling bullying might include
- **Involve parents:** ensure that parents reinforce the College's messages and know that their concerns will be taken seriously.
 - **Involve students:** all students must be clear of the College's approach and understand their role in preventing bullying.
 - **Training of staff** to raise their awareness of bullying so that they may take action to reduce the risk of it at times and in places where it is most likely.
 - **Regularly evaluate** and update their approach. Take into account technological advancements. Carry out student questionnaires.
 - **Implement disciplinary sanctions** to ensure that students and parents see that the College takes the issue seriously.
 - **Openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying** through Assembly, Chapel, Lessons, PSHE etc
 - **Use specific organisations or resources for help with particular problems**
 - **Provide effective staff training**
 - **Work with the wider community** such as the police or children's services if appropriate.

- **Make it easy for students to report bullying** so they know they will be listened to and taken seriously, including incidents outside College.
- **Create an inclusive environment** where students and staff can openly discuss bullying without fear of bullying or mockery.
- **Celebrate success** to help engender a positive College ethos.

Child on Child Abuse

20. Taking into account all of the information above, it might well be that any case of bullying might reach the threshold for child on child abuse. Therefore any case of bullying will be discussed between the Senior Deputy Head and the DSL, and if the threshold for child on child abuse has been met a referral will be made. More information on child on child abuse can be found in the College's Safeguarding Policy and in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024.