



Approaches to Bullying

A Policy, including Policy into Practice

(To be read in conjunction with the Outstanding Conduct and Behaviour Policy)

Introduction

Schools have a duty of care for pupils and staff alike and, to this end, Fairfield High School for Girls strives to create a happy and safe environment, believing that all bullying is unacceptable, whether at home, at school, at work, in the local community or when social networking.

We believe that school should provide a supportive, caring and safe place for young people to learn and for adults to work. If this is achieved, the school will be able to develop learning and teaching, whilst fostering an attitude of responsible behaviour at all times to promote safety, both on the premises and out of school hours.

This Policy's primary objective is to ensure that members of the school community are clear about their roles and responsibilities, and how to manage a bullying incident if it occurs.

However, bullying is not confined to school and this Policy aims to make pupils aware of what action they can take both now and in their adult lives, whether as victims of bullying, or as bystanders.

Context

This Policy draws on the Department for Education's guidance on dealing with bullying, particularly 'Preventing and tackling Bullying – advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies' 2014.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the 'Outstanding Conduct and Behaviour Policy'. It also takes into account the Education and Inspections Act (2008) and Equality Legislation.

Definitions of Bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, often repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

School recognises that bullying takes a number of forms, including:

- Emotional, being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding possessions).
- Threatening gestures, spreading rumours.
- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting punching or any use of violence.
- Racist racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
- Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
- Homophobic abuse or focusing on the issue of sexuality.
- Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours and teasing – especially an older pupil to a younger one.
- Cyber-Bullying – via the internet, such as email and internet chat room misuse, mobile threats by text messaging and calls and misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities.

Most experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves.

No person deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

As a school we have a responsibility to respond promptly, sensitively and effectively to issues of bullying.

Signs and Symptoms

A victim may indicate by signs or behaviour that she is being bullied.

These may include:

- Reluctance to attend school.
- Unwillingness to travel on the school bus/public transport.

- Truancy from specific lessons.
- Damage to clothing or possessions.
- **'Losing'** more items than usual.
- Unexplained bruises/swellings.
- Deterioration of school work/academic performance.
- Being afraid to use the Internet.
- Becoming jittery about receiving text messages.
- Unkempt uniform.
- Bullying towards siblings and others.
- Taking money without permission.

Symptoms may include:

- Loss of appetite.
- Headaches.
- Stomach aches.
- Stammering.
- Sudden changes in behaviour.
- Lack of confidence.
- Signs of depression.
- Nervous/edginess.
- Difficulty in concentration.
- Lack of motivation to complete work.

These are examples but this list is not exhaustive.

Reporting Bullying

Pupils are encouraged to report all forms of bullying, whether carried out by another pupil or by an adult. The hope is by reporting the problem in the first instance, this will become the first step in empowering the victim to overcome the bullying through the defined stages that will then be put into action. Whenever a pupil experiences bullying, it should be reported, whether by the victim, friends of the victim, bystanders or via parents, who would contact the school.

Information can be reported to any member of staff, including support staff, a Form Tutor, a Progress Coordinator, Progress Director or a member of the Senior Leadership team.

All staff should safely secure the safety of the young person before following the school's procedures.

Responding to Bullying

As a Community, we recognise that bullying can become endemic unless a proactive stance is taken.

We therefore undertake to:

- Ensure that adults in school, teachers, clerical workers, support staff etc. are aware of the issues and fully understand the mechanisms for dealing with cases reported to them.
- Always take any accusations of bullying seriously.
- If deemed appropriate inform parents of all parties about any incidents, this may be in the form of a phone call, letter home, or inviting parents in for discussion/negotiation and remediation of the situation.
- Always deal with incidents as they arise with the appropriate member of staff and record all incidents and the action taken.
- Remain flexible in responding to situations, as each will be individual and thus unique.
- Remember that punishment does not necessarily guarantee that the bullying behaviour ceases.
- Operate on the guiding principle that each young person at Fairfield has the right to feel safe and secure.
- Understand that sometimes bullies have been victims themselves and that their behaviour may be a result of underlying issues that require sensitive handling or guidance.
- Regularly consult pupils and staff to gain an accurate picture of the degree of bullying within school.
- Identify '**vulnerable**' pupils especially in Year 7 and provide support in raising their self-esteem and confidence.

POLICY INTO PRACTICE DEALING WITH BULLYING INCIDENTS

Introduction

All forms of bullying will be treated seriously, whether they take place in the grounds, corridors, classrooms or elsewhere.

A central record will be kept of bullying incidents and it is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that this record is complete and up to date.

The emphasis of any action taken should be educative, rather than punitive. In other words, incidents should be dealt with firmly, reasonably, sensitively and calmly. Adopt a problem solving approach, which moves pupils on from justifying themselves.

Prevention

Fairfield's approach to bullying starts with measures designed to encourage pupils to behave positively towards each other, thereby discouraging bullying.

These measures include:

- Our everyday ethos and expectations of personal contact right across school at all times.
- Through Assemblies and the promotion of anti-bullying where awareness is raised about bullying and the impact it can have on an individual. We supply all registered pupils with guidelines on bullying in the Fairfax which can help them identify whether they are being bullied and recommend coping strategies and a framework for support and advice.
- At classroom level - during all lessons, but particularly during Life Skills and in Form Tutor time.

Here the focus is on developing strong anti-bullying messages and challenging the idea that bullying is an acceptable part of growing up. We address the topic at an early stage within the framework of our Life Skills Curriculum and help to develop generic coping strategies which better equip young people to deal with the issues around bullying.

- At particular times when pupils can be more vulnerable to bullying such as lunch and break times and the beginning and end of the school day. Pupils are supervised at breaks, lunchtime and on the corridors. There are staff on duty before and after school who can be approached for support if required.
- Providing safe places for vulnerable pupils to go at break times and lunchtimes - e.g. the Library and Student Support Centre.
- Mentors being available for those pupils requiring extra support.
- Pupils having the opportunity for confidential/anonymous communications - e.g. questionnaires.
- By listening and acting upon information from parents/carers who believe their children are victims of bullying and working with them to help keep their children safe in the future. All expressions of concern will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly. Parents/carers should contact the Progress Coordinator of their child's year group in the first instance.

School

When a member of staff receives information, either directly or indirectly, that a pupil may have been a victim of bullying, this report will be taken seriously and investigated.

If bullying is suspected or reported, the member of staff who has been approached should deal with the incident immediately.

- Ensure the victim is safe.
- Statements should be taken from the victim, suspected bully and any witnesses.

- The incident discussed with the Progress Coordinator and a course of action decided.
- A clear account should be recorded on IRIS indicating what happened, action taken, who the bully was and who the victim was.
- Punitive measures will be used as appropriate.
- Parents will be kept informed.
- The Form Tutor of the pupil who has been bullied will follow up within two weeks to see if the bullying has stopped.

Pupils

Our school will offer a proactive, sympathetic and supportive response to pupils who are the victims of bullying.

The exact nature of the response will be determined by the particular pupil's individual needs and may include:

- Immediate action to stop the incident and ensure the pupil's safety.
- Positive reinforcement that reporting the incident was the right thing to do.
- Reassurance that the victim is not responsible for the behaviour of the bully.
- Strategies to prevent further incidents. ☑ Sympathy and empathy.
- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a Form Tutor or member of staff of their choice.
- Offering continuous support.
- Restoring self-esteem and confidence.
- Assertiveness training.
- Extra supervision/monitoring.
- Creation of a support group.
- Informing parents/carers.
- Adult mediation between the perpetrator and the victim (provided this does not increase the victim's vulnerability).
- Being given information on bullying.

We take bullying behaviour very seriously and will adopt a pragmatic, problem-solving approach to enable bullies to change their behaviour.

Pupils who have bullied may be helped by:

- Restorative approaches.
- Discussing what happened.
- Discovering why the pupil became involved.
- Establishing the wrongdoing and the need to change.
- Informing parents/carers to help change the attitude of the pupil.
- Offering anger management support.
- Offering counselling.

We will deal with incidents of bullying in a proportionate way – the more serious the cause for concern the more serious the response. When sanctions are felt to be necessary they will be applied consistently and fairly.

The following options will be considered:

- Immediate action to stop an incident of bullying in progress.
- Engagement with the bully to reinforce the message that their behaviour is unacceptable.
- Loss of lunch/break privileges.
- Official warnings to cease offending.
- Detention. ☒ Put on report.
- Removal from class/group.
- Withholding participation in sports or after school activities (if not an essential part of the school curriculum).
- Parents/carers informed.
- Adult mediation between the perpetrator and the victim (provided this does not increase the victim's vulnerability).
- After consultation with the Headteacher, exclusion from certain areas of school premises.
- Internal isolation.
- Minor fixed term exclusion after consultation with the Headteacher.
- Major fixed term exclusion after consultation with the Headteacher.
- Involvement of external bodies such as the Police.
- Permanent exclusion after consultation with the Headteacher.