



## Anti-Bullying Policy

### INTRODUCTION

Bullying is an insidious social problem. In the school environment it can affect both students and staff. It is the responsibility of the whole school community to tackle bullying by ensuring the development of a caring and supportive ethos in which it is clear that any form of bullying will not be tolerated.

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

Although not an exhaustive list, common examples of bullying include:

- PHYSICAL - hitting, kicking, pushing, spitting, pinching, tripping someone up, stealing/damaging someone's belongings
- VERBAL - name-calling, sarcasm, insulting a person's family, threats of physical violence, spreading rumours, constantly putting someone down
- EMOTIONAL - tormenting, threatening ridicule, humiliation, excluding someone from a group
- RACIST - insulting language/gestures based on a person's actual or perceived ethnic origin or faith, name-calling, taunts, graffiti, racially motivated violence
- SEXUAL - sexually insulting language/gestures, name calling, graffiti, unwanted physical contact, abusive comments
- HOMOPHOBIC - insulting language/gestures based on a person's actual or perceived sexuality, name-calling, graffiti, homophobic violence
- ELECTRONIC - bullying by text-message, bullying on the internet (on social media, in chat rooms, on bulletin boards and through instant messaging services), hate websites

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF, 2007) defines Cyberbullying as "the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and internet, deliberately to upset someone else".

*"Cyberbullying is a "method" rather than a "type" of bullying. It includes bullying via text message; via instant messenger services and social network sites; via e-mail; and via images or videos posted on the internet or spread via mobile phone....It can be used to bully by reasons of race, religion, sexuality, disability etc."*

*[Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools" DCSF 2007]*

Cyberbullying might be perpetrated by anyone and may have the following characteristics and features:

- Electronically circulated – audience may be large and reached rapidly
- Single incidents may be copied and posted / shared
- Likely to be anonymous
- May take place on or off the education premises
- Invades home and personal space at any time
- Intended to threaten, manipulate or humiliate, defame or impersonate
- Likely to be deliberate
- Occasionally unintentional (but no less potentially damaging)
- Malicious

The Local Authority, or the Governing Body, as employer has duties under the 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all those using their premises. This includes students, all staff and visitors. Head teachers have a legal duty to take measure to prevent bullying among pupils and also a duty to do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees.

There are a number of very important reasons for challenging bullying behaviour in our schools:

- The safety and happiness of students and staff. When people are bullied, their lives are made miserable. They may suffer injury. They may be unhappy about coming to school. Over time, they are likely to lose self-confidence and self-esteem. Some may blame themselves for ‘inviting’ the bullying behaviour.
- Educational achievement. The unhappiness of bullied students is likely to affect their concentration and learning. Some children will avoid being bullied by not going to school.
- Providing a model for helpful behaviour. If they observe bullying behaviour going unchallenged, other students may learn that bullying is a quick and effective way of getting what they want. Those students who are being bullied may interpret the school’s inaction as condoning unacceptable behaviour. They will feel badly let down by adults in authority.
- Getting a reputation as an effective, caring school. No school can claim with absolute confidence that “there is no bullying here”. Every school has some degree of bullying, even if only slight or infrequent. Parents know this. They will be impressed and reassured by a school which demonstrates both through policy and action that it will respond positively and effectively to bullying.

Bullying is a community issue. It affects students, families, non-teaching staff and governors as well as teachers. Families can be powerful allies for schools in trying to resolve bullying situations, and they are often the first to detect that a problem exists.

Our policy dovetails with other pastoral policies, the individual schools and the federation development plan. Of particular significance are the relationships between the Anti-bullying policy and our Behaviour, Equal Opportunities and ICT policies. These underpin a coherent system for facilitating a healthy social and learning environment in and around the schools.

## A DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying is defined as “conduct intended to cause hurt, either physical or psychological, which is unprovoked and which continues over a long period”.

## MEASURES FOR PREVENTION

- watching for early signs of distress in students
- providing curriculum time to discuss bullying so that students will be encouraged to reject anti-social behaviour
- use of tutorial time to discuss the Federation’s ‘Equal Opportunities’ and ‘Anti-bullying’ policies
- use of posters and other forms of publicity to make students aware of the school procedures
- encouraging an ethos which supports the victim and which raises awareness of this issue and makes all members of our community a resource in countering bullying
- developing confidence in our systems for tackling bullying
- devising a whole-federation strategy to combat bullying
- audit of school grounds and general organisation e.g. lunchtime supervision
- provide INSET for all teaching and non-teaching staff and make sure that they are aware of the school procedures.

## HOW BULLYING WILL BE TACKLED

- listen carefully and record all incidents on the report forms available in the staff rooms, held by Heads of Year, Heads of House and the Head of Sixth Forms
- offer the victim immediate support, counselling and use of the pastoral system
- contact the victims parent/carer
- contact the parents/carer of the bully and explain the consequences of any repetition. Offer counselling to the bully and his/her family.
- The victim and the bully should record the events in writing as should any staff involved in the discussions
- The parents/carers of students involved should be sent copies of all correspondence and reports placed in the respective students’ files for a period of **six years** after their leaving date
- The parents/carers of the students should be asked to respond in writing

In addition, where cyberbullying is suspected the schools will use the authority given under the Education and Inspections Act (2006) to take reasonable action to:

- regulate the conduct of students when they are off-site or not under the control or charge of any member of staff
- confiscate items from students, including mobile phones, when they are being used to cause a disturbance in class or in contravention of the behaviour or anti-bullying policies

- request a student to reveal a message or show other content on their phone for the purpose of establishing if bullying has occurred
- search through a phone where a student is reasonably suspected of involvement

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

- the relevant member of staff should continue to counsel both victim and bully for as long as is deemed necessary
- parents/carer should be contacted to follow up the incident, if necessary
- staff should be made aware of the situation and asked to monitor any developments

The Leek Federation will not tolerate any form of bullying. The schools undertake to work positively with students, parents and staff to prevent instances bullying wherever possible, but will take appropriate action on all occasions where bullying does occur which in serious cases may ultimately result in permanent exclusion.

**ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNORS ON:                      June 2015**

**POLICY REVIEW DATE:                                      June 2017**