

## Preventing and Tackling Bullying Policy

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Review cycle/date:	Every 3 years, July 2024
Party responsible:	Student Committee
Linked policies:	Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding Policy

### Introduction

The Swanage School is committed to preventing all forms of bullying. We work hard to ensure that bullying plays no part in our community by proactively dealing with all students, their families and staff, to eradicate and promptly address all reported incidents.

Everyone at The Swanage School sees the issue of bullying as a serious matter.

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to reduce the incidence of bullying and create an environment in which everyone feels safe, secure and respected.

Accordingly, the school will

- Create a culture, where students are confident to report incidents of bullying and understand that their concern will be taken seriously
- Ensure that a clear, uniform approach to dealing with all forms of bullying is adopted and regularly monitored
- Anti-bullying initiatives are an integral part of the Citizenship/Assembly programme for all years
- Facilitate the appointment and training of 'Big brothers and Big sisters' and other anti-bullying initiatives
- Provide advice to parents and students on the school website
- Provide appropriate in-service training for all staff
- Provide a physical environment where students feel safe and secure
- Enlist the help and active support of parents and outside agencies

## Bullying Defined

Bullying is the willful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten, frighten or make someone feel uncomfortable over a period of time, where it is difficult for the person being bullied to defend themselves. It is distinct from random acts of aggression.

Bullying manifests itself in a number of ways

- Physical e.g. assaulting a person or property
- Verbal, e.g. name-calling or teasing
- Damaging of personal property
- Indirect, damaging the reputation of the character of the victim or socially excluding them from games or conversation
- Cyber-bullying e.g. using technology particularly mobile phones and the internet deliberately to upset someone else

Bullying affects the ability of a student to fully participate in and enjoy school life.

## Dealing with Bullying

The Swanage School has a climate where it is 'the norm' to report bullying if it occurs.

When bullying is reported there are three aims:

- For the bullying behaviour to stop
- For the perpetrator to understand the consequences of their behaviour and that it is not acceptable and must change
- For the victim to feel safe and secure in the knowledge that the bullying will stop

Parents/carers of both victim and perpetrator will at least be kept informed of the actions carried out by the School, and for more serious cases, be involved in the restorative process of rectifying the situation.

The school will record all incidents of bullying on the school MIS.

## Prevention Strategies

**Staff charter** – The adult as a model:

Staff will not misuse a position of power to dominate the students in this school.

We will avoid:

- i) Sarcastic comments
- ii) Derogatory nicknames

- iii) Dominating and humiliating behaviour

We will listen to students when they are willing to talk about bullying.

We will be sensitive to a student's need for privacy and respect, encouraging the ethos of 'not only is it safe to tell, it's important to tell'.

### Student Charter

Students will recognise each other's rights to:

- i) be physically safe
- ii) keep/ own possessions and money
- iii) be free of insult, derogatory terms and teasing
- iv) be able to associate with other young people for companionship and friendship

The culture of the school will encourage students to ensure the:

- i) physical safety of others
- ii) security of everyone's personal possessions and money
- iii) freedom from hurt by name-calling, teasing and inclusion of all students in social and learning activities

### Peer Support

Peer support includes students from all years to act as mentors to each other.

### The Curriculum

We aim to make anti-bullying initiatives an integral part of the curriculum for all years. Where appropriate teachers encourage discussion, group work and co-operative learning to demonstrate the importance of bullying issues.

**Bullying must never be kept a secret**

### Dealing with bullying

All incidents of bullying will be taken seriously and dealt with as quickly as possible. 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 bullying, school staff will:

- I. Listen to all accounts of the incident

2. Adopt a problem-solving approach that encourages students to find solutions rather than simply justify themselves
3. Ensure that all relevant personnel within school have been informed
4. Record the incident promptly on the school MIS, as soon as practically possible after the incident, ideally within the day
5. Incidents will be reviewed to identify students, type, style and location of bullying. This will enable the school to identify patterns and to develop appropriate action plans
6. Adopt a restorative approach in the first instance, implementing sanctions as appropriate and in consultation with all parties concerned
7. Liaison with the relevant persons to ensure there is targeted support to address the underlying issues
8. Make regular follow-up checks to ensure that bullying has not resumed

### Procedure to support a student who has been bullied

1. Listen to the student's account of the incident
2. Reassure the student that reporting the bullying incident was the right thing to do
3. Ideally, allow the student to write a statement or make a note of what the student said
4. Explain that the student should report any further incidents to a teacher or other member of staff immediately

### Investigating the allegation

Ideally, the student should be given the time and appropriate accommodation to make a written statement, which is jointly checked by the student and member of staff and where necessary amended to ensure clarity. This information is passed on as soon as possible to student's Tutor or the Head of House depending on the seriousness of the allegation.

The student should write/say:

1. What happened
2. Whether or not this was the first incident, if not how many other incidents have there been
3. Who was involved
4. Where it happened
5. Who saw what happened (staff as well as students)
6. What the student had already done about it

Depending on the content of the allegation the accused bully and any witnesses will be asked to write statements of their own about the incident.

Members of staff who witnessed the incident should be asked to write the relevant details down as soon as possible and give these to the staff investigating.

The victim should be consulted regarding their return to learning activity.

## Supporting students

### Students who have been bullied

Depending on the nature of the bullying incident a student might be supported by one or more of the following:

- Their tutor
- Another adult (e.g. teaching assistant, SENCo)
- Pastoral support team
- Other students/'Big brothers Big sisters'/student leaders
- Specialist counsellor

The critical thing is for the student to feel confident to report any other incidents of bullying. To achieve this, ideally the relationship between the bully and the victim will be restored (or just formed for the first time) through restorative conversation(s). This is led by a member of the pastoral support team.

### Students who have bullied

Often, bullies themselves have been victims. Often they do not understand the hurt they have caused. In most cases the bully will receive counseling by a member of the pastoral support team in preparation for a restorative conversation with the victim.

The conversation with the bully might include:

1. How things are going generally in school
2. Why they acted as they did
3. A discussion of how bullying affects others
4. A discussion about how to join in with others without bullying
5. Examples of and praise for positive behaviours – the 'good book' can be used here

## Bullying by text message, mobile phones and the internet

Students will be warned about the need for care when giving out their contact details, whether through social networks or mobile phone number. A record should be kept of the date and time of any offensive messages. Students are encouraged to show the messages to a member of school staff and incidents are dealt with the same rigour as any other incident.

There may be occasions where the phone is kept by the school for a period of time or handed to the police in some instances.

## Monitoring, evaluation and review

The effectiveness of this policy is monitored both day to day and more strategically.

### 1. Ongoing monitoring

- Review of bullying incidents as recorded by the bullying record on the school MIS
- Informal feedback from students about bullying incidents and how they feel in school
- Discussions with parents, both formal and informal
- Formal feedback via the school council meetings

### 2. Strategic:

- Formal evaluation of the bullying records (annual), and report to FGB
- Annual student questionnaire
- Annual parent questionnaire

The Governing Body will review this policy every three years and assess its implementation and effectiveness.