



Stowmarket
High School

THE FUTURE · OUR BUSINESS

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

This policy is reviewed bi-annually.

Policy Reviewed	November 2023
Next Review Due	November 2025

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Rationale:

This school is committed to providing a caring, friendly, safe, positive and inclusive environment for all students and staff so that they can work in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in our school.

Students must feel safe and respected if they are to learn effectively. At Stowmarket High School we set high standards for our students and it is important that we create an atmosphere in which bullying cannot thrive and in which no student has to suffer from harassment of any kind. Because bullying happens in all societies, at all levels, it is important that we make our students knowledgeable about bullying and teach them strategies that enable them to stand up for themselves without resorting to retaliation in any form. Because bullying is in the news and is a form of real anxiety for families and carers, it is important that we inform families and carers fully about our approach to dealing with bullying, so that they are able to distinguish between what is bullying and what is not.

Aim:

To show the school's approach to bullying with a strong emphasis on how we try to prevent it happening as well as how we deal with it if it does occur.

School's Approach:

Our approach is based on the following:

- We aim to make the school one in which bullying rarely occurs
- We need to work to prevent bullying in the first place
- We need to support the victim in dealing with the problem
- We need to work with the bully to prevent them continuing to behave unacceptably
- We encourage students to tell us if they or their friends are being bullied.

It's the Headteacher's and Assistant Headteacher's (safeguarding) responsibility to make sure the actions listed below are being followed, through ensuring that all Heads of Year, tutors and staff know the action we take.

Our definition of bullying:

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. Bullying should not be seen as friends falling out, although that can on occasion escalate into a bullying situation. It can be:-

- Undermining confidence
- Name calling
- Threatening
- Extorting money
- Damaging property/belongings
- Graffiti or spreading rumours about the victim
- Abusive phone calls/text messages/emails/messages/pictures on the internet
- Turning others against the victim
- Pushing/kicking/shoving/hitting
- Forcing the victim to do something they don't want to
- Getting the victim into trouble
- Stealing their belongings
- Consistent criticism designed to put someone down
- Unpleasant references on internet/chat lines/social media
- It can be a one-off situation or it can be a gradual build up over time.

When/where is bullying likely to take place in relation to our students?

- On the bus
- Walking to and from school
- Walking around the school between lessons
- Lunch time/break time both within the building and on the fields – particularly vulnerable places are toilets, classrooms when staff aren't around
- In lessons and registration
- At home and/or outside school, especially through the use of mobile phones, email and on the internet through social media or gaming.

Remember it can happen at any age, including after students leave us when they no longer have the protection of the school. At Stowmarket High School we will always show students how to develop strategies that prevent bullying happening and how to deal with it if it does occur.

Why does bullying happen?

- If a student is in any way different and/or lacks confidence about that difference – especially for homophobic comments, comments about being seen to be too clever or very weak, or if someone is overweight.
- If the bully and victim are of different cultures (ethnic minorities, travellers), beliefs or peer groups.
- When a student falls out with her/his friends.
- If a student looks or acts vulnerable.
- If there's anything unusual about a student's looks.
- If a student is dirty or smells.
- If a student has low self-esteem – both the victim and bully will often have low self-esteem.
- Family feuds that come into school.
- Dislike that builds up over time – especially if it's fuelled by friendship groups on both sides.
- When a bully feels threatened by the power or popularity of another student; or if they are jealous of another student.
- When a bully is unhappy about something, maybe at home, and they take out their aggression on more vulnerable people.
- When a bully has learnt the power of bullying from being bullied themselves and decides to exert that power.
- If someone is showing off.

We recognise that different types of bullying include:

Physical – hitting, kicking, spitting, tripping someone up, stealing/damaging someone's belongings, etc.

Verbal – name-calling, insulting a person's family, threats of physical violence, spreading rumours, constantly putting a person down

Emotional/psychological – excluding someone from a group, humiliation.

Racist – insulting language/gestures based on a person's actual or perceived ethnic origin or faith, name-calling, graffiti, racially motivated violence

Sexual – sexually insulting language/gestures, name-calling, graffiti, unwanted physical contact

Homophobic – insulting language/gestures based on a person's actual or perceived sexuality, name-calling, graffiti, homophobic violence

Cyber – bullying by text message, bullying on the internet (in chat rooms, on bulletin boards and through instant messaging services), hate websites.

Child on Child - Children and young people may be harmful to one another in a number of ways which would be classified as peer on peer abuse.

Prejudice-based bullying

Bullying is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, on the grounds of ethnicity, religion and belief, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation or disability. It might be motivated by actual differences, perceived differences or as a result of association with someone else. We record these forms of prejudiced based bullying by their type. This is in recognition that these groups are protected

by the Equality Act 2010 because of the prejudice experienced by some groups in the wider society. We also recognise that there are others groups of children and young people who may be vulnerable to bullying including children that are in care, young carers or those with mental health issues. We recognise therefore that we sometimes have to look at developing specific work or practice to prevent bullying of groups of students.

Prejudice based / hate incident

This is a one-off incident which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility, prejudice or ignorance, based on a person's perceived or actual ethnicity, gender, disability, religion, beliefs, sexual orientation or gender identity or their association with someone from one of these groups. These can also include indirect prejudice driven behaviour that is not targeted at one individual. The impact of this expression of prejudice against an equality group whether intentional or not can be damaging and must therefore be responded to as a prejudice based or hate incident. One-off incidents are not bullying, however we record prejudiced based incidents using the above definition. At Stowmarket High School we recognise the impact that prejudice can have on students.

Being proactive

Bullying can seriously damage a young person's confidence, sense of self-worth and future mental health and students will often feel that they are at fault in some way. Students may not realise they are being bullied because of their age or special educational need. Students that are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness or taking unusual absences. There may be evidence in learning patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school. These signs and symptoms may indicate other problems, but bullying is considered a possibility and will be investigated. Therefore, like other safeguarding issues, staff aim not wait to be told of bullying to raise their concerns. We are also aware that some groups of students may find it harder to report bullying than others. For example, black and minority ethnic pupils might feel that reporting racism will put their friendship groups at risk. Wherever possible and appropriate, we will involve those who are experiencing bullying in finding the solutions.

Strategies for responding to bullying behaviour – A Whole School Approach

Reporting bullying

Early identification of bullying is the most effective way of minimising bullying behaviour and the effects on the person being bullied. We also acknowledge that the perpetrator needs to understand that their behaviour is unacceptable. This student(s) will need support to change their behaviour and explore the underlying reasons for bullying. Students are encouraged to report any harmful or hurtful behaviour, even if they are not sure whether it is bullying. They are encouraged to report for themselves or for their friends. They can do this through:

- Speaking to their form tutor
- Speaking to another trusted adult in the school community
- Speaking to a parent/carer who may then contact the school
- Speaking to a friend and asking the friend to help tell an adult

Responding to bullying

All students have a role to play to intervene to support their peers (if it is safe to do so) and to report bullying by:

- Alerting an adult in school to any concerns
- Talking to their friends about the situation

All of us have a responsibility to avoid encouraging or inciting bullying and to not stand by and let someone else be harmed.

Engaging with Families

At Stowmarket High School it is important that we work with families to help them to understand our approach with regards to bullying and to engage promptly with them when an issue of bullying comes to light, whether their child is the student being bullied or the one doing the bullying. We will ensure families are made aware of how to work with us on bullying and how they can seek help if a problem is not resolved. Some families may need specific support to help deal with their child's behaviour. Where our school identifies that this is the case, we will initially provide support ourselves or signpost the parents to appropriate channels of help. (See appendix 1)

We will endeavour to ring parents on the same day that the incident occurred;

Roles and responsibilities

Safeguarding committee member – Amy Underwood

Headteacher – Lucie Hernandez

Assistant Headteacher & Behaviour lead – Stefan Stoneman

Assistant Headteacher & Designated Safeguarding Lead – Andy McLellan

Assistant Headteacher & Online Safety Lead – Andy McLellan

The Headteacher ensures that all staff at Stowmarket High School:

- Communicate this policy to the school community, to ensure that disciplinary measures are applied fairly, consistently, and reasonably, and that a member of the senior leadership team has been identified to take overall responsibility.
- Recognise that some members of our community may be more vulnerable to bullying and its impact than others; they develop and deliver effective strategies to prevent bullying from happening and provide appropriate support, if required.
- Commit to facilitating intervention by identifying and tackling bullying behaviour appropriately and promptly
- Deal with bullying concerns sensitively and effectively; that everyone should feel safe to learn and abide by the anti-bullying policy.
- Are trained to identify all forms of bullying, and to follow the school policy and procedures (including recording and reporting incidents)
- Report back to parents/carers regarding concerns on bullying and deal promptly with complaints
- Support staff to promote positive relationships, to help prevent bullying.
- Investigate incidents promptly and as fully as possible.
- Support the management of bullying issues through facilitating communication and consultation within parents / carers and relevant agencies when appropriate.
- Utilise support from the Local Authority and other relevant organisations when appropriate.
- Learn from good anti-bullying practice elsewhere and share this with the senior leadership leaders and wider staff (through delegated responsibility from the Headteacher).
- Create and support an inclusive environment which promotes a culture of mutual respect.
- Work with staff and outside agencies to identify all forms of prejudice-driven bullying. Actively provide systematic opportunities to develop students' social and emotional skills, including their resilience.
- Challenge practice which does not uphold the values of tolerance, non-discrimination, and respect towards others.
- Proactively gather and record concerns and intelligence about bullying incidents and issues so as to effectively develop strategies to prevent bullying from occurring.

At Stowmarket High School, we value student voice. We will:

- Regularly canvas student views on the extent and nature of bullying and build this as part of curriculum offer.
- Ensure that all students know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying with staff or through My Concern.
- Ensure that all students are aware of the range of sanctions which may be applied against those engaging in bullying.
- Involve students in anti-bullying campaigns in schools and embed messages in the wider school curriculum.
- Offer support to students who have been bullied and to those who are bullying in order to address the problems they have.

Staff at Stowmarket High School will:

- Make sure that key information (including policies and named points of contact) about bullying is available to parents/carers in a variety of formats.

- Ensure that all parents/carers know who to contact if they are worried about bullying Ensure all parents/carers know about our complaints procedure and how to use it effectively.
- Ensure all parents/carers know where to access independent advice about bullying Work with all parents/carers and the local community to address issues beyond the school gates that give rise to bullying.
- Ensure that parents work with the school to role model positive behaviour for students, both on and offline.
- Check at regular intervals on the welfare of a student who has been bullied, but we do rely on students reporting any repetition. Whilst sanctions will be used against the bully(s), both students and parents must understand that we cannot take action if we are not made aware.

Advice for students (if you have been bullied)

- If you feel able to and it is safe to do so, ask the bully to stop, ignore it, say no and walk away
- Try not show you are upset or angry, but remember this is not your fault
- Tell a friend what is happening and ask for their support
- Tell a trusted adult in or out of school (ask a friend to go with you if it helps)
- Do not delete evidence of online bullying as it can be used as evidence
- It is possible the situation will take time to resolve, but unless you tell someone, we cannot help you – and we can make sure you are safe

Advice for Parents and Carers

- Listen and talk to your child about the situation and discuss and agree next steps.
- Contact your child's Head of Year if you are worried or concerned
- Monitor social networks/computer use
- Reinforce the value of good behaviour

Staff:

All staff will be expected to:

- Promote an environment that is constructive and safe for all students through their own practice and actions
- Follow the procedures set out in this policy when they are dealing with bullying
- Work in cooperation with colleagues, students, parents/carers, staff from other organisations in the local community and the School Committee to combat bullying.

Find out the facts from the victim:

- Check if anyone else witnessed it
- Check with the victim what they would like us to do
- Find out the facts from the victim and any witnesses. Talk to the alleged bully to find out their account of the incident/s. Then ask why they have behaved that way and explain the consequences and expected future behaviour
- Sometimes it's appropriate to talk to the two together, especially if it's a falling out based on a misunderstanding, to try and put things right
- Give the bully a warning, from a member of staff (often the pastoral staff), that it is never to happen again and if it does there will be serious consequences
- Contact parents of the bully
- Contact parents of the victim and outline what support we can offer.

Set up strategies to support the victim:

- Arrange help sessions via meetings with pastoral staff or online help websites
- Give them a mentor
- Consider the use of Restorative Practice
- Encourage the victim to keep a daily log that can be shown to the year team so any incidents can be dealt with promptly. If they are handed in each day, this means any problems can immediately be followed up. These are usually given out for up to three weeks
- Pair up to a member of staff so that they've got a safe haven to go to at any point in the school day
- Give them a "time out" card if they need one (it will stipulate where the student can go) so they can leave at any point if they are upset without having to explain
- Allow them to phone home if they need to once a day or whenever
- Regular phone calls home to check all is well. Always phone three weeks after the initial report to see how things are
- There may well be a reason why the victim is bullied which we can support them with e.g. clothes, smell, hanging onto groups who don't want them
- Ensure the incident is written up in both the victim's and the bully's file
- Record all incidents on Go 4 Schools and our Bully Log which allows us link incidents together and monitor the situation in the future.
- Depending on the level of the bullying, work with the bully to try to stop them behaving in a similar way. A lot of bullies will have very low self-esteem, and will often have difficult home circumstances. They too may benefit from a mentor. They might also benefit from something like online help websites.
- If the bully continues with their action then we will step up the action that we take. At this point the gentle approach disappears, though our aim still needs to be to stop the bullying, and therefore we need to find time to reason with the students as well as sanctioning them – deprive them of lunchtimes, break time, keep them with us at registration, take them away from their tutor group and/or place them with HOY/SLT. If the problem is on the bus, they could be removed from the bus, initially for a few days. (See below for the next step if there is still no improvement).

We will consider a tutor group change if the bullying is within a form group. Sometimes however it can work well if you get the rest of the tutor group on the side of the victim, and they will look out for the victim.

Throughout the process check that the victim is aware of what is happening and that they are OK. Watch out for the bully getting others in her/his form, or other friends, to act against the victim.

The sanctions need to get progressively more demanding. They may be kept after school so they can't go home at the same time as the victim. They may go into Supervised Exclusion. They may be excluded for a lengthy period from the bus. We will exclude the bully, permanently if necessary (or apply for a managed move) if they continue to impact on the health and safety of others.

With incidents outside school, we encourage parents to let the police know. Sometimes we'll speak to the students to try to calm things down, sometimes we contact all the families concerned to let them know what we would recommend. School will not deliver sanctions to students following incidents which occur out of school but we can help with advice.

Bullying by a teacher towards a student would be dealt with through disciplinary procedures. Bullying by a student(s) towards a teacher is dealt with in a more disciplinary way, usually by the Headteacher, as the victim is generally less vulnerable.

Our first approach must be preventative

How do we try to prevent it?

- Posters around the school with lists of contacts of people both in and outside school that would help people if they were unhappy
- Being very pro-active and letting students know when we've taken serious action
- Not having areas where bullying is likely to take place e.g. cloakrooms, huge areas of lockers
- CCTV inside the building and outside focused on specific parts of the school grounds
- Assemblies throughout the year telling of our approach; there may need to be further assemblies during the year
- Tutor discussions throughout the year to focus on bullying
- Looking at the topic in the curriculum, particularly within PSHE
- During school transition we always ask if there is anyone a student doesn't want to be with to minimise the possibility of igniting previous issues.

Student(s) identified as the bully(s)

- Sanctions (as identified within the school's relationship policy) and support for individuals will be implemented, in consultation with all parties concerned.
- If necessary, other agencies may be consulted or involved, such as the police (if a criminal offence has been committed) or other local services including early help or children's social care (if a child is felt to be at risk of significant harm).
- Where the bullying takes place off the school site or outside of normal school hours (including cyberbullying), the school will ensure that the concern is fully investigated. Appropriate action will be taken, including providing support and implementing sanctions in school in accordance with the school's relationship Policy.
- A clear and precise account of the incident will be recorded by the school in accordance with existing procedures. This will include recording appropriate details regarding decisions and action taken.
- Students identified as a bully will be dealt with quickly and efficiently in line with the expectations and systems identified in the relationships policy (behaviour for conduct policy)

Education and Training

At Stowmarket High School we will provide opportunities to:

- Update staff on the latest publications around forms of bullying and exploitation (including, for example – Online, child-on-child abuse, Child Sexual Exploitation and County Lines), within the context of contextual safeguarding.
- Consider a range of approaches for addressing bullying throughout the curriculum and other activities, such as: through displays, assemblies, peer support, the student union and Tutor Time programme.
- Develop students' social and emotional skills, including building their resilience and self-esteem through a comprehensive Relationships, Sex and Health Education.

How do we get to know about it?

- Student will tell a family member, a member of staff or their peers or their mentor
- We'll find the student upset
- A friend or parent will tell us
- We'll notice a student has lost her/his spark, they'll start being ill and wanting to go home, attendance might slip, their appearance might change etc
- Students may have mobile phone/internet evidence
- The student might write about it in their work
- Something seen on CCTV or once reported we may be able to confirm it on CCTV.

It is essential that when we do know about it, we promise that we will do our very best to solve it; we might not get it right the first time, but we will keep working at it, and that we have several approaches that we can use.

Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 states that maintained schools must have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst students. At Stowmarket High School we have incorporated this information into this policy. In addition to following these statutory requirements, we follow advice from the department for education on creating an environment and culture that addresses bullying should it arise. The link shown below provides more details of this approach.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>

At Stowmarket High we have the following policies in place that should be read in conjunction with this policy:

- Behaviour For Conduct Policy
- Child on Child Abuse Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Equalities Act 2010
- Education and Inspection Act 2006, 2011
- Children Act 1989
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997 & Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- SEND Code of Practice 2015

Appendix 1 - Accessing additional support. As a school we use the advice and guidance of the charities and organisation shown below when dealing with bullying related issues.

- Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- Beat Bullying: www.beatbullying.org
- Childline: www.childline.org.uk
- Family Lives: www.familylives.org.uk
- Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk
- MindEd: www.minded.org.uk
- NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk
- PSHE Association: www.pshe-association.org.uk
- Restorative Justice Council: www.restorativejustice.org.uk
- The Diana Award: www.diana-award.org.uk
- Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk
- Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk
- Young Carers: www.youngcarers.net

Cyberbullying

- Childnet International: www.childnet.com
- Digizen: www.digizen.org
- Internet Watch Foundation: www.iwf.org.uk
- Think U Know: www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk

LGBTQ+

- EACH: www.eachaction.org.uk
- Pace: www.pacehealth.org.uk
- Schools Out: www.schools-out.org.uk
- Stonewall: www.stonewall.org.uk SEND
- Changing Faces: www.changingfaces.org.uk
- Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk

SEND

- Changing Faces: www.changingfaces.org.uk
- Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk
- DfE: SEND code of practice: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

Racism and Hate

- Anne Frank Trust: www.annefrank.org.uk
- Kick it Out: www.kickitout.org
- Report it: www.report-it.org.uk
- Stop Hate: www.stophateuk.org
- Show Racism the Red Card: www.srtrc.org/educational

Appendix 2 - Obligatory Practice Procedure

Obligatory Action	Practice/procedure / actions that are specific to Stowmarket High School
Form Tutor/Head of Year/SLT Pastoral Lead/ Behaviour Lead/ DSL informed – determination of case. Is it bullying?	Teachers and staff members may also be involved in this process
Statements taken from alleged victim, perpetrator, and witnesses	Statements should be standardised, signed, and dated and reflect objectively what has occurred
Parents/ carers of all parties informed at the appropriate opportunity	The medium of communication may be via email, telephone or verbal in nature
Full recording of incident logged on My Concern	This may be by the originator (witness) or a member of the wider team
Follow up meetings arranged with parents/ carers where appropriate	There may be instances where meetings raise the need for broader interventions such as 'Early Help' etc
Potential PCSO involvement in serious cases or as an ongoing intervention for individuals/groups	There may be cases where the seriousness merits police involvement or where parents/ carers have made that contact themselves
Specific and compulsory, intervention work with the perpetrator(s)	Interventions may include, restorative justice, anger management; empathy programme; behaviour contract; use of 'Peer Mentors'.

Appendix 3

Any student that is found to have discriminated against another person or group of people will be asked to complete the Stowmarket High School – ‘Return to the community pledge. This contract will be signed by students and families.

Saying NO to Discrimination and Prejudice

By signing this pledge I agree to:

- 1. Treat others **respectfully**, in an environment that is free from prejudice and discrimination
- 2. Treat other with **kindness** and tolerance appreciating that everyone is unique and different
- 3. **Report incidents of bullying** to staff so that students are not discriminated against by refusing to watch, laugh or join in when someone is being bullied.
- 4. Help those who are being bullied ensuring that they access the support and care they deserve and need.

Student Name:

Student Signature

Date

Parent / Carer Name(s):

Parent / Carer Name Signature(s)

Date

School representative name:

School representative name and signature

Date