



**COLMERS SCHOOL**  
& SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

Whole School Policy:

Anti-Bullying Policy

Written By:

Barry Doherty (Headteacher)

In:

June 2016

Review Date:

June 2018

## 1.0 Statement of intent

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so that they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all pupils 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 anywhere in school or travelling to and from school has a responsibility and duty to tell members of staff.

## 2.0 What is bullying?

Bullying is behaviour that exists across both genders and all age groups. Bullying takes many forms, face to face, or through third parties. The hurt can be physical or emotional, or both.

Bullies usually pick on one or more aspects of a person's background or appearance; for example their ethnicity, religion, gender, disability, social grouping, background or sexuality.

Some bullying is physical:

- Kicking, hitting, pushing
- Taking and damaging belongings

Some bullying is verbal:

- Name calling
- Taunting, mocking
- Making offensive comments
- Making threats

Some bullying is social:

- Excluding people from groups, deliberately ignoring
- Gossiping, spreading rumours

Some bullying uses modern technology such as mobile phones, or the internet. This 'cyber bullying' includes:

- Text message bullying
- Phone call bullying
- Picture/video-clip bullying (via mobile phone cameras)
- Mail bullying
- Chat-room bullying
- Bullying through instant messaging
- Bullying via websites

In recent years bullying trends have moved towards more remote methods, often entirely anonymous.

## 3.0 Why is it so important to respond to bullying?

Students of secondary school and sixth form college age are developing cognitively, academically, emotionally and behaviourally. Colmers School is committed to promoting academic *and* emotional intelligence amongst all students.

Damage to a young person's self esteem and confidence can and should be avoided; therefore all students should be safe from bullying and other forms of emotional distress.

Damage to a young person's ability to empathise and care for the well being of others can and should be avoided; therefore all bullies should take responsibility for their choices and be given opportunities to reflect upon and change their treatment of other people.

Damage to a young person's confidence and desire to safely intervene, on behalf of a victim of bullying, can and should be avoided; therefore all students should be given the strategies to avoid becoming a negative bystander and act on behalf of their fellow students in a way that protects their own and other's safety and well being.

#### **4.0 The purpose and objectives of this policy**

This policy sets out how students, parents, governors, teaching staff and non-teaching can work together to reduce incidents of bullying at Colmers School & Sixth Form College.

- All students and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is and what the school will do in response to incidents of bullying.
- As a school we take bullying seriously. Students and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

#### **5.0 The signs and symptoms of bullying**

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- Is frightened of walking to or from school
- Doesn't want to go on the school/public bus
- Begg to be driven to school
- Changes their usual routine
- Is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- Begins to truant
- Becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Feels ill in the morning
- Begins to do poorly in school work
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- Has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- Has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Comes home hungry (money/lunch has been stolen)
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable, i.e. mood swings
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Is nervous and jumpy when a cyber message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

## 6.0 Procedures

### Students:

- Bullying incidents can and should be reported to ANY member of staff.

### Parents:

- If a parent is concerned about bullying they should contact (by telephone, email or in person) their son or daughter's Learning Tutor or Head of Learning & Achievement.

### Teachers and Non-Teaching Staff:

- Bullying incidents, of any type, should be fully recorded and passed, immediately, to the relevant Head of Learning & Achievement.
- The Head of Learning should then decide the most appropriate colleague to follow up, investigate and resolve the matter. The Head of Learning retains overall monitoring and accountability of any subsequent action.
- Child protection or safeguarding concerns, niggles or allegations must be reported, without delay, to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or other trained colleagues. Currently JP + LW, TC, HM and BD.

## 7.0 Responding to reports of bullying

The way that teachers respond to reports of bullying will depend on each incident. We are aware that schools have a greater chance of encouraging the victims of bullying to come forward if they (and their parents) feel part of a decision making process.

Bullying and bullies, by their nature, take on different forms and characteristics. There is a spectrum of bullying that ranges from very planned and malicious incidents, to those that are spontaneous and regretted soon afterwards. Similarly, bullies can range from very self consciously aggressive and intimidating, to those who are genuinely unaware or unable to recognise the negative results of their behaviour.

Consequently, the way the School intervenes and responds to incidents of bullying will reflect the seriousness of the incident and the feelings and wishes of the victim and their family.

Possible intervention strategies used to end bullying include:

- Discussing the situation with the victim. This attempts to arrive at ways of ending their experiences. *Useful when the victim and his or her family wishes to initially avoid confronting the bully.*
- Establishing a support group for the victim by a member of teaching staff, including his or her friends and peers. *Useful for a variety of bullying, ranging from less to more serious incidents.*
- Counselling / mediation between the victim and the bully; this may also include bystanders. *Often useful when friends fall out.*
- Circle Time; an opportunity for large groups of students to discuss issues together. *This is very useful when general, rather than individual, bullying issues can be shared and resolved.*
- Peer mentoring of a younger student by an older student in the school. *Particularly useful when a victim does not have siblings or friends providing advice and possible solutions.*
- Applying a sanction on the bully. *This is an important part of our process, however it must lead to a change in the behaviour and attitude of the bully.*

Possible sanctions used in response to bullying include: A formal warning of a fixed term exclusion  
A verbal reprimand.

- Detention: at break time and after school.
- A period of internal exclusion in the Remove Room.
- A fixed term exclusion.
- In exceptional circumstances, permanent exclusion.

## 8.0 Prevention of bullying at Colmers School & Sixth Form College

As a school we will reduce levels of bullying by:

- Being a telling school. This means that all students (and adults) have a duty to report all incidents of bullying. Reliable evidence shows that this is an effective deterrent because the bully knows that he or she will not get away with their behaviour.
- Regularly revising our anti-bullying policy; sharing it with students, parents and governors.
- Using tutorial time/assemblies, Learning for Life and other subject lessons to raise awareness of the issue of bullying.
- Encouraging students to speak out about bullying.
- Providing copies of the anti-bullying policy to parents and students on request.
- Producing and distributing abridged copies of the policy for distribution in student planners and on tutor base notice boards.

## 9.0 Bystanders

Since 1994 reliable research (Smith and Sharp (1994), Craig and Pelter (1997) and O'Connell (1999)) has demonstrated the 'power of the group' in maintaining and developing a culture of bullying in schools. Research (Sammivalli (1996, 1999)) has identified four types of bystanders and their contribution to a culture of bullying:

1. **Assistants:** Those who join in and assist the bully, verbally or physically for example.
2. **Reinforcers:** Those who provide positive feedback to the bully, for example by laughing or making encouraging gestures.
3. **Outsiders:** They stay away, not taking sides, with either the bully or the victim. Bullying continues due to their silent approval.
4. **Defenders:** Those who show anti-bullying behaviour by comforting the victim, taking sides with them and those that attempt to stop the bullying.

Bullying is, therefore, a social phenomenon in which a range of students contribute a variety of roles, pressures and influences, either intentionally or unintentionally.

Consequently, the School encourages all students to avoid being a negative bystander.

- Students are encouraged to report bullying to a member of staff or use the email and text services.
- Students are encouraged to own their own behaviour and measure their contribution to another's distress.
- Students that actively encourage bullying, either as an 'assistant' or 'reinforcer' can expect to face a sanction imposed by the school.