

# Godstowe

## School Policy

### Anti-Bullying

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#### Aims

Our aim is to ensure that pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and we don't tolerate it. We believe that when all issues of bullying are addressed pupils are able to fully benefit from the opportunities available at Godstowe.

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#### Definition

Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. The main types of bullying are:

- physical (hitting, kicking, theft)
- verbal (name calling, racist remarks)
- indirect (spreading rumours, excluding someone from social groups)
- subtle (nasty looks, gestures – often difficult to detect)
- cyber bullying (use of ICT: the internet and mobile phones being used deliberately to upset someone else; it can take place at any time and intrude into places which have previously been regarded as safe or personal; the target group can be large and reached very rapidly; the person doing the cyber bullying may remain anonymous; it can occur between peer groups but also across generations)
- racist (usually verbal: victims are singled out because of the colour of their skin; the way they talk; their ethnic grouping)
- sexist bullying (abusive name-calling; gestures and comments about appearance)
- homophobic bullying (verbal: involving name-calling; public ridicule; text messaging and the regular use of offensive and discriminatory language that refers to someone's sexual orientation. It also often manifests itself indirectly through the spreading of rumours and/or the social isolation of the individual)

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#### Broad Guidelines

Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in their work patterns, a lack of concentration or a reluctance to come to school. All pupils are encouraged to report bullying to a member of staff at the earliest opportunity.

At Godstowe all staff are encouraged to be alert for signs of bullying and to act promptly. Within the curriculum the staff at Godstowe will raise the awareness of the nature of bullying through inclusion in PSHE, form tutorial time, assemblies and subject areas, as appropriate, in an attempt to eradicate such behaviour. Pupils are made aware that they cannot beat bullying single handed.

All children are encouraged to talk to members of staff they feel comfortable with. Tutors, Heads of Division, House staff, Sister, their parents, Deputy Heads and the Headmaster are all available to talk to girls who have concerns relating to bullying. Godstowe also has an independent listener who comes into school on a regular basis.

If a member of staff thinks a child is being bullied they should report this to the Head of Division who will keep the Deputy Head Pastoral and the Headmaster fully informed.

## **Procedures**

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The following steps may be taken when dealing with incidents:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the member of staff should immediately speak to the Form Tutor and Head of Division;
- A course of action will be determined as appropriate (we recognise that sometimes the word 'bullying' is used inappropriately) ;
- A member of the pastoral team will listen to both parties and through discussion will endeavour to help both the person(s) doing the bullying and the person being bullied. Other children involved will be brought into the discussions;
- The bully will be asked to offer an apology and, if possible, the bully and the victim will be reconciled
- Actions are agreed with all parties;
- If necessary parents will be informed and may be asked to attend a meeting to discuss the problem;
- Over the coming week the member of staff should informally check, that things have improved for all concerned, on a daily basis;
- The Deputy Head Pastoral and the Headmaster should always be kept fully informed;
- The Head of Division will file a record of the incident in the appropriate pastoral files;
- Form Tutors should always be kept informed;
- Other staff should be informed on a need to know basis – it is important they are told that it may be a confidential issue.

## **Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:**

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- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a form tutor or member of staff of their choice;
- Reassuring the pupil;
- Offering continuous support;
- Reassuring them that bullying cannot be beaten single handed;
- Restoring self-esteem and confidence;
- Being given the chance to contribute to the solution.

## **Pupils who have bullied will be helped by:**

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- Discussing what happened;
- Discovering why the pupil became involved;
- Establishing the wrong doing and need to change;
- Informing parents/guardians/house mistresses to help change the attitude of the pupil.

### **The following disciplinary steps can be taken:**

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- A meeting organised with the pupil and parents and an official warning given that the pupil may be suspended or excluded if bullying continues
- Suspension
- Permanent exclusion

### **Advice to pupils:**

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- Tell someone – friend, teacher or parent;
- Make sure they explain how the situation is affecting them and how they are feeling;
- Make sure that they have a say in the solution;
- They understand that you cannot beat bullying on your own;
- ‘Bystander apathy’ is not acceptable behaviour.

### **Advice to staff dealing with bullying:**

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- It should be acknowledged that some children set themselves up as victims and the reasons for this should be thoroughly investigated and appropriate counselling given;
- Some forms of bullying are known to be unintentional e.g. when a comment is forwarded from a second party without prior thought of the effect it may have;
- PHSE and form tutor sessions can be used to reinforce and talk through issues with a group of children;
- Any suspicions of a potential bullying problem identified can be raised and discussed at staff meetings or briefings;
- Any adverse behaviour which may be precursor of bullying may be addressed by behaviour modification methods, such as anger management, accompanied by careful monitoring.

### **Cyber bullying:**

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Pupils and parents need to be aware of ‘cyber bullying’ and that:

- the school can support them with ‘cyber bullying which may occur outside the school premises;
- the school has ways in which to monitor use of the internet within the community;
- positive use of the internet and mobile phones is encouraged by the pupils and they are made aware of the harm and pain they can bring to others by misuse.

Advice and support for a victim of ‘cyber bullying’:

- Ask the child not to retaliate or return messages;
- Ask the child what information they have in the public domain;
- Ask the child for any evidence they have of the bullying: e-mail addresses; websites; photographs; text messages etc;
- Check the child knows how to prevent the bullying continuing; such as changing their contact details; blocking contacts; leaving a chat room.

## Advice and support for a 'cyber bully'

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- Steps need to be taken to ensure the bully understands the effect their actions are having on the victim (procedures should be followed as with any other form of bullying)
- If the incident has occurred by mobile phone this may be confiscated

## Monitoring of the policy:

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Through discussion with the pupils

- Regular meetings with the Monitors;
- Regular meetings with Playwatch members;
- Pupil council and boarding council meetings;
- A box is provided outside the Pastoral Deputy Head's room where children can place notes pertaining to their worries.

Through discussion between members of staff

- Meetings between members of staff;
- Feedback from the Independent Listener.

## Conclusion

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We believe that early intervention is the best way of dealing with bullying.

Every pupil in Godstowe School has the right to enjoy his or her learning and leisure free from intimidation, both in the school and within the boarding community. Bullying will not be tolerated in our school but we cannot pretend that it doesn't happen here. **Bullying is NOT an inevitable part of growing up; it DOESN'T usually sort itself out.** Our policy is to work together to help towards the goal of making school life happy and secure for all children. It is our responsibility as school to protect this right.

This policy has been rewritten in October 2008 and will be updated annually.

All new staff will be made aware of it as part of the induction process at Godstowe.

NOTE: Page 32 of the staff handbook includes procedures for dealing with bullying.

NOTE: Policy on Break and Lunch Duties

