



Exeter School

Anti-Bullying Policy

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STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Exeter School community is based upon respect, good manners, and fair play. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence, and any form of harassment so that every one of our pupils can develop their full potential. In line with our virtues, pupils are expected to act with kindness and integrity, and to be intentionally welcoming and of service to others, fostering an inclusive community where diversity and inclusivity are valued.

Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting Exeter School in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and parents have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together. Acceptance of this policy forms part of our standard terms and conditions.

Any kinds of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and discrimination are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff, and the school. Where necessary, we will apply the sanctions described in our Behaviour Policy for behaviour that constitutes bullying or harassment of any kind.

Exeter School has a robust approach to bullying and will do all it can to support victims (and perpetrators) and educate pupils about the importance of an anti-bullying culture. We foster an



inclusive environment and do not tolerate any bullying related to the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

This policy is designed to be clear, practicable and sensible. The school aims to prevent bullying and to deal effectively with bullying if it does occur. We shall do this by:

- maintaining an environment characterised by warmth, positive regard, and mutual respect, so that bullying will be less likely.
- raising awareness of bullying through the curriculum and other activities.
- having a clear Behaviour Management Policy, and Expectations and School Rules for pupils.
- developing effective strategies for recognising and supporting victims of bullying and for recognising and dealing with bullies.
- ensuring that all staff know what to do if they come across bullying, that they treat incidents seriously and that they are consistent in their approach.
- assuring parents and pupils that all reports of bullying will be treated seriously.
- continuing to review this policy on our annual basis and our current practice on an on-going basis and making use of the most up-to-date national guidance. (Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for head teachers, staff and governors, July 2017, and Approaches to preventing and tackling bullying, Case studies, June 2018).

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying can mean different things to different people and takes different forms, but two major elements are that:

1. bullying is persistent behaviour, repeated over time which intimidates individuals or groups through verbal, emotional or physical aggression.
2. bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to intentionally hurt, threaten or frighten someone else. Bullying may be defined as the intentional hurting, harming, or humiliating of another person. It can take the form of racial, religious, cultural, sexual, sexist, misogynistic, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, or special educational needs / disability related bullying. It may occur directly through physical (including sexual) contact or intimidation, verbal comments, and emotional means (by excluding, tormenting, or spreading malicious rumours).

It can also occur using technology (social media, group chats, email, photos, and text messaging apps, etc) and emotional means (by excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidatory.



Bullying may involve actions or comments that are racist, homophobic, which focus on special education needs and/or disabilities, health condition, home circumstances and their culture or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape). Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time. It can cause serious and lasting psychological damage and even lead to suicide. Harassment and threatening behaviour are criminal offences. We always treat bullying incidents seriously.

SIGNS OF BULLYING

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to return to school.
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet.
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with, or spoilt by others.
- Books, bags, and other belongings suddenly go missing, or are damaged.
- Change to established habits (e.g., giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary).
- Psychological damage and diminished levels of self-confidence.
- Frequent visits to the medical room with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches.
- Unexplained cuts and bruises.
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class.
- Choosing the company of adults.
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact.
- Difficulty in sleeping, experiences nightmares.
- Talking of suicide or running away

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers.

RECOGNISING THOSE WHO MAY BE VULNERABLE TO BULLYING

Bullies usually pick on vulnerable pupils. Vulnerability is not always visible to adults and the victim may look and behave like any other pupil. Recognition is made more difficult as some victims are 'passive' whilst others are 'active'. Even though it is not always easy, teachers should try to identify those who might be seen as vulnerable.

Pupils vulnerable to bullying may:

- be new to the class or school



- be different in appearance, speech, or background from other pupils
- identify as non-binary, or transgender, or might be questioning their gender identity
- identify as homosexual or bisexual, or might be questioning their sexuality
- suffer from low self-esteem, whether as cause or effect of bullying
- be nervous, anxious, insecure – tend to be sensitive and quiet
- be younger and weaker than the rest of the peer group – less likely to retaliate
- be isolated, lonely or 'loners' – sometimes 'only children' with minimal experience of socialising and who are close to their parents
- appear or have in the past been powerful, aggressive, provocative and disturbed: these are 'active' victims
- be evidently more academically able than others
- have special educational needs or disability

RECOGNISING THOSE WHO MAY BE POTENTIAL BULLIES

Identification of the 'typical' bully is difficult as the background, nature, motivation, and actions of bullies can vary considerably. Those who act aggressively and overtly are obviously easier to identify as bullies than those who are more subtle and covert in their actions. Teachers will have to use their experience, training, and professional judgement in recognising a bully, who may exhibit the following characteristics:

- is aggressive to peers, teachers, parents and siblings
- likes to dominate, calls out, shows off
- has a positive attitude to violence and exhibits anti-social behaviour
- uses abusive or inappropriate language

Teachers should understand that such behaviour often masks academic or other inadequacies, insecurity, humiliation, the effects of being bullied themselves and other emotional and family problems. Alternatively, such pupils may be academically clever, confident, arrogant, undisciplined at home and spoilt.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

Exeter School takes the following preventative measures:

- The school uses appropriate form meetings, house meetings and year group assemblies to explain the school policy on bullying. Our Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the school. The programme is structured to enforce the message about community involvement and taking care of each other. It specifically tells pupils whom they should inform if they are being bullied or are worried that another pupil is being bullied.



- Lessons in some subjects cover the issue of bullying and teach moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable and develop social skills.
- All our pupils are told to tell a member of the teaching staff or their form tutor or head of year at once if they know that bullying is taking place. Every member of staff is trained on how to respond to such allegations as part of their induction training.
- All reported incidents are recorded on CPOMS (Child Protection Online Management System) and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents. CPOMS records enable any possible patterns to be identified.
- Exeter School has a strong and experienced pastoral team, supported by the senior leadership team who are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority, and are alert to possible signs of bullying.
- As part of their induction, all new staff receive guidance on the school's anti-bullying strategy.
- Our pastoral staff provide support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both victims and bullies.
- Our school chaplain, school nurse, and pastoral assistants are part of our pastoral support service, providing specialist skills and support. They can provide advice and counselling support to pupils who can refer themselves to them when they have social, emotional, or behavioural concerns, or be referred to them by the pastoral team. The school's medical room provides advice on where pupils can seek help, including details of confidential help lines and web sites connecting to external specialists, such as Childline, Kidscape, Get Connected, and the Samaritans. All pupils have access to a telephone helpline in the medical room enabling them to call for support in private.
- The school uses SWGfL's 'Whisper' app, which pupils can access on their devices, and which allows them to report any instance of bullying anonymously. Staff monitor the app daily and respond to any reports, offering support and guidance.
- Staff are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class and patrol the school site, particularly areas where bullying might occur. They are trained to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour.
- The school provides leadership training to our house captains and senior prefects which specifically covers the importance of offering support and assistance to younger and to vulnerable pupils.
- The school reserves the right to investigate incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips and that occur in the vicinity of the school, involving our pupils
- The school welcomes feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures.



CYBERBULLYING – DEFINITION

Mr Bill Belsey, the creator of the web site: <http://www.cyberbullying.org/> defined this unpleasant phenomenon in the following terms:

“Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others.”

Cyberbullying can involve social networking sites, emails, and mobile phones.

CYBERBULLYING – PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

In addition to the preventative measures described for the prevention of bullying above, Exeter School seeks to prevent cyberbullying through the following measures:

- All pupils must read and agree to the School's ICT Acceptable Use Policy annually, and a record of this is logged for each pupil.
- All pupils are expected to adhere to its charter for the safe use of the internet. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our IT Department monitors pupils' use.
- The school may impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet.
- All pupils are issued with their own personal school email address.
- The school adheres to the DfE guidelines regarding the teaching of online safety (Teaching online safety in schools, DfE 2019).
- The school offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites in PSHE lessons, which covers blocking and removing contacts from buddy lists.
- The school offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe.
- The use of cameras on mobile phones is not allowed in the showers and changing areas.
- The school provides regular presentations for pupils and parents on online safety and the safe use of the internet.
- Further details on the use of the internet and mobile phones are provided in the Policy on the Use of Mobile Telephones, and ICT Acceptable Use Policy.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH REPORTED BULLYING

Reports of bullying will always be taken seriously. Staff will listen to parents or pupils and assure them that matters will be investigated fully and will take appropriate action. Parents and pupils will be informed of the outcome. Parents are assured that reporting any incident will not aggravate the situation, and also that no significant action can be taken unless the perpetrator is named.

If an incident of bullying is reported, the following procedures are adopted:



- The member of staff to whom it was reported or who first discovers the situation, will seek to control the situation and reassure and support the pupils involved.
- He/she will inform an appropriate member of staff such as the form tutor or head of year. In serious incidents, the Head (Headmistress of the Junior School) will be informed.
- The pupil(s) affected will be interviewed on his/her own and asked to write an account of events or have one written for them by the member of staff dealing with the matter, in the case of younger children.
- The alleged perpetrator, together with all others who were involved, will be interviewed individually, and asked to write an immediate account of events or have one written for them by the member of staff dealing with the matter, in the case of younger children.
- Records of the incident(s) will be kept.
- The pupil(s) affected will be seen at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team and offered support to develop a strategy to help him or herself.
- The alleged perpetrator will be seen at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, and it will be made clear why his/her behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. He/she will be offered guidance on modifying his or her behaviour, together with any appropriate disciplinary sanctions.
- The parents/guardians of all parties should be informed. In serious cases parents/ guardians will be invited into school to discuss the matter, and a way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and appropriate counselling, should be agreed. A meeting might also be held involving all the parties, with close staff supervision, to help develop a strategy for all concerned to close the episode.
- In very serious and persistent cases, and only after the Head or the Headmistress of the Junior School has been involved, strong sanctions may be necessary such as exclusion, and in such cases, it may also be necessary to make a report to the Police or to the Social Services. (See paragraph below: 'Criminal Law')

Criminal law

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.

If school staff feel that an offence has been committed, they should seek assistance from the police. Such contact would normally be made by the DSL after consultation with pastoral staff and those dealing with the matter in school. The DSL will refer to the document *“NSPCC – When to call the police”* for further guidance as needed.



RAISING AWARENESS OF BULLYING

Pupils: Pupils need to be made aware that the school disapproves of bullying and will not tolerate it, that victims will be supported and that bullies will be punished.

Initial form groupings will take into account the recommendation of previous schools, so that pupils are placed in groups which are likely to prove supportive. Form tutors should be alert to the formation of cliques of pupils, which are exclusive and designed to keep other pupils out. If form groups are rearranged, due weight will be given to the preferences of pupils and the recommendation of staff in establishing compatible groups. The PSHE programme, the curriculum and other activities will be used to raise awareness of bullying, including the following:

- The PSHE programme in Y3-11 includes sessions on respect, friendship and managing conflict, appropriate for each year group. Within those sessions, or in form periods, pupils should be encouraged to discuss what actions count as bullying and should be helped to understand that it is right to tell a teacher if a pupil is being bullied.
- In the junior school pupils are encouraged to use 'The three steps' system of conflict management. This involves the 'victim' asking the person causing upset, to cease, and can ultimately lead to the 'victim' seeking out a teacher/TA to help resolve the situation.
- RE lessons, assemblies, and chapel: e.g., specific messages from the Bible and examples of 'right living' from other religions / faiths.
- Physical activities and Community Service: e.g., the need for teamwork, sharing apparatus, the importance of skilful, disciplined play rather than rough, aggressive tactics, the ability to lose gracefully and be generous in victory.
- Talks from external agencies, appropriate to various age groups, as part of the PSHE and Citizenship programmes: e.g., the Police, Samaritans, Armed Forces, Health care providers.

Staff: Staff should be especially vigilant when supervising break times, and lunch times, carrying out zonal patrols, walking to and from activities, supervising games and clubs and on off-site visits. Staff should visit their own and other form rooms regularly during times when lessons are not occurring there.

Staff at Exeter School will also be actively encouraged to increase their awareness of bullying and their expertise in dealing with incidents.

- Heads of year will look at bullying in general and certain specific incidents in meetings to ensure that approaches to situations are comprehensive and consistent.
- All staff will be reminded periodically that pupils should not always choose teams, or seating or work partners, and that they should vary seating plans to ensure that certain pupils are not isolated. This applies particularly when a class contains an odd number of pupils.
- Year 7 tutors will be asked to arrange activities, including the Dartmoor residential/welcome weekends, to encourage strategies for working together. In other year groups form activities such as charity fundraising can achieve a similar purpose
- Pupils in Y5 and Y6 also have a residential organised for them.



- All staff will be made aware of the need for special vigilance when supervising pupils on an outing, whether for the day or overnight, ensuring that rooming plans chosen by pupils are not used to isolate individuals.
- Staff training / Inset will include 'in-house' sessions run by senior staff and invited professionals from time to time to raise awareness of bullying and its prevention. Staff attendance at professional meetings and conferences will also be encouraged.
- The Head and Headmistress in the junior school will pass on any advice received from professional bodies such as HMC, IAPS and DfE to the pastoral staff.

Parents: The management of the school, the atmosphere prevailing in the school and the degree of co-operation and communication between home and school must be such that parents do not worry about their sons and daughters being bullied in school. Parents must feel confident that the school will listen, take their concerns seriously and act against aggressive, bullying pupils; they must feel confident that any victims will be supported and that effective strategies are in place to try to prevent and to deal with instances of bullying. Parental awareness will be raised through:

- Informing them of the existence of the anti-bullying policy and making it available to them.
- Talking to the parents of new pupils at the appropriate new parents meeting about lines of communication and assuring them that any concerns will be taken seriously.
- Reminding parents that bullying is not acceptable at Exeter School.
- Communication and co-operation with parents of both bullies and those affected by bullying discussing what they can do at home to prompt new behaviour in the bully and to build self-confidence in the victim.