

Fairfield High School for Girls

Policy for Anti-Bullying



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Person Responsible:	Headteacher	

Outstanding progress for all

Introduction

Schools have a duty of care for pupils and staff alike and, to this end, Fairfield High School for Girls strives to create a happy and safe environment, believing that all bullying is unacceptable, whether at home, at school, at work, in the local community or when social networking. We believe that school should provide a supportive, caring and safe place for young people to learn and for adults to work. If this is achieved, the school will be able to develop learning and teaching, whilst fostering an attitude of responsible behaviour at all times to promote safety, both on the premises and out of school hours.

This policy's primary objective is to ensure that members of the school community are clear about their roles and responsibilities, and how to manage a bullying incident if it occurs. However, bullying is not confined to school and this policy aims to make pupils aware of what action they can take both now, and in their adult lives, whether as victims of bullying, or as bystanders.

Statutory duties of the school

Headteacher's have a legal duty under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to draw up procedures to prevent bullying among pupils and to bring these procedures to the attention of staff, parents/carers and pupils. Under the Education Inspections Bill 2006, the duties are extended to include preventing/responding to bullying that happens outside school, where it is reasonable to do so. Schools also have a duty to 'safeguard' and promote the welfare of pupils (Education Act 2002) and to ensure that children and young people are safe from bullying and discrimination (Children's Act 2004). Government guidance advises that the policy should also address the bullying of staff by pupils ('Safe to Learn' DCSF 2007) (Coalition Government documents and Law-Equality Act 2010, Education Act 2011).

Scope of this Policy and links to other Policies

This policy includes:

- Bullying of pupils by pupils within school.
- Bullying of and/or by pupils outside of school, where the school is aware of it.

Allegations about bullying of pupils by staff will be dealt with under the school's Policy for Child Protection and Safeguarding.

Definitions of Bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, often repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

School recognises that bullying takes a number of forms, including:

- Emotional, being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding possessions).
- Threatening gestures, spreading rumours.
- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting punching or any use of violence.
- Racist racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
- Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
- Homophobic abuse or focusing on the issue of sexuality.
- Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours and teasing – especially an older pupil to a younger one.

- Cyber-bullying – via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video.

Most experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship, which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves.

No person deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. As a school, we have a responsibility to respond promptly, sensitively and effectively to issues of bullying.

Who bullies?

Anyone has the capacity to bully. There are no completely reliable predisposition diagnoses. However, those who perceive themselves as low status within a community, institution or group may use bullying in an attempt to artificially boost their status. Self-esteem is therefore a key factor in whether someone bullies or not. This puts equal opportunities and inclusion at the centre of all anti-bullying work in schools.

Who is bullied?

Anyone can be bullied – young person, parent/carer/guardian, staff member or volunteer. People who suffer bullying are often perceived by others to be different. Sometimes the perceived difference is individual to that person – shyness, physical appearance, clothing and possessions, accent, perceived inappropriate behaviour.

Frequently the perceived difference comes from assigning an individual to a group. Such bullying would then be designated as class, disability, homophobic, racist, religious or sexist. People can be assigned to be a member of more than one group.

Identifying and reporting concerns about bullying

All concerns about bullying will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly. Pupils who are being bullied may not report it. However, there may be changes in their behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absence or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school. All school staff will be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with this policy.

Pupils who are bullying others also need support to help them understand and change their behaviour.

Pupils who are aware of bullying ('bystanders') can be a powerful force in helping to address it and will be encouraged to do so in a safe way.

All pupils will be encouraged to report bullying by:

- Talking to their Form Tutor or a trusted member of staff of their choice.
- Sending an email to a member of staff.

- Parents/carers will be encouraged to report concerns about bullying to their child's Form Tutor or a member of the Pastoral Team and are expected to support the school in tackling it. Trying to resolve bullying directly with the bully or their families can lead to problems escalating.

Responding to bullying

As a community, we recognise that bullying can become endemic unless a proactive stance is taken.

We therefore undertake to:

- Always take any accusations of bullying seriously.
- Operate on the guiding principle that each young person at Fairfield has the right to feel safe and secure.
- Ensure that adults in school, teachers and support staff etc. are aware of the issues and fully understand the mechanisms for dealing with cases reported to them.
- If deemed appropriate, inform parents/carers of all parties about any incidents, this may be in the form of a phone call, letter home, or inviting parents in for discussion/negotiation and remediation of the situation.
- Always deal with incidents as they arise with the appropriate member of staff and record all incidents and the action taken.
- Remain flexible in responding to situations, as each will be individual and thus unique.
- Remember that punishment does not necessarily guarantee that the bullying behaviour ceases.
- Understand that sometimes bullies have been victims themselves and that their behaviour may be a result of underlying issues that require sensitive handling or guidance.
- Regularly consult pupils and staff to gain an accurate picture of the degree of bullying within school.
- Identify 'vulnerable' pupils especially in Year 7 and provide support in raising their self-esteem and confidence.

DEALING WITH BULLYING INCIDENTS

All forms of bullying will be treated seriously, whether they take place in the grounds, corridors, classrooms or elsewhere.

The emphasis of any action taken should be educative, rather than punitive. In other words, incidents should be dealt with firmly, reasonably, sensitively and calmly. Adopt a problem-solving approach, which moves pupils on from justifying themselves.

A central record will be kept of bullying incidents and it is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that this record is complete and up to date.

Prevention

Fairfield's approach to bullying starts with measures designed to encourage pupils to behave positively towards each other, thereby discouraging bullying.

These measures include:

- Our everyday ethos and expectations of personal contact right across school at all times.

- Give care and support to create and maintain a safe learning environment where all pupils feel safe, secure and valued and know they will be listened to and taken seriously in line with the school ethos.
- Through assemblies and the promotion of anti-bullying where awareness is raised about bullying and the impact it can have on an individual. We supply all registered pupils with guidelines on bullying in the Fairfax, which can help them identify whether they are being bullied and recommend coping strategies and a framework for support and advice.
- At classroom level - during all lessons, but particularly during Life Skills and in Form Tutor time. Here the focus is on developing strong anti-bullying messages and challenging the idea that bullying is an acceptable part of growing up. We address the topic at an early stage within the framework of our Life Skills curriculum and help to develop generic coping strategies, which better equip young people to deal with the issues around bullying.
- At particular times when pupils can be more vulnerable to bullying, such as lunch and break times and the beginning and end of the school day. Pupils are supervised at break times, lunchtimes and on the corridors. There are staff on duty before and after school who can be approached for support if required.
- Providing safe places for vulnerable pupils to go at break times and lunchtimes e.g. the Library and Student Support Centre.
- Mentors being available for those pupils requiring extra support.
- By listening and acting upon information from parents/carers who believe their children are victims of bullying and working with them to help keep their children safe in the future.
- Participate in local and national initiatives, such as Anti-Bullying Week and the work of the LA's behaviour network.
- Pupils having the opportunity for confidential/anonymous communications, e.g. questionnaires.

All expressions of concern will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly. Parents/carers should contact their child's Form Tutor in the first instance.

School

When a member of staff receives information, either directly or indirectly, that a pupil may have been a victim of bullying, this report will be taken seriously and investigated.

If bullying is suspected or reported, the member of staff who has been approached should deal with the incident immediately.

- Ensure the victim is safe.
- Statements should be taken from the victim, suspected bully and any witnesses.
- The incident discussed with the Head of Year and a course of action decided.
- A clear account should be recorded on IRIS indicating what happened, action taken, who the bully was and who the victim was.
- Punitive measures will be used as appropriate.

- Parents will be kept informed.
- The Form Tutor of the pupil who has been bullied will follow up within two weeks to see if the bullying has stopped.

Pupils

Our school will offer a proactive, sympathetic and supportive response to pupils who are the victims of bullying. The exact nature of the response will be determined by the particular pupil's individual needs and may include:

- Immediate action to stop the incident and ensure the pupil's safety.
- Positive reinforcement that reporting the incident was the right thing to do.
- Reassurance that the victim is not responsible for the behaviour of the bully.
- Strategies to prevent further incidents.
- Sympathy and empathy.
- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a Form Tutor or member of staff of their choice.
- Offering continuous support.
- Restoring self-esteem and confidence.
- Assertiveness training.
- Extra supervision/monitoring.
- Creation of a support group.
- Informing parents/carers.
- Adult mediation between the perpetrator and the victim (provided this does not increase the victim's vulnerability).
- Being given information on bullying.

We take bullying behaviour very seriously and will adopt a pragmatic, problem-solving approach to enable bullies to change their behaviour. Pupils who have bullied may be helped by:

- Restorative approaches.
- Discussing what happened.
- Discovering why the pupil became involved.
- Establishing the wrongdoing and the need to change.
- Informing parents/carers to help change the attitude of the pupil.
- Offering anger management support.
- Offering counselling.

We will deal with incidents of bullying in a proportionate way. When sanctions are felt to be necessary they will be applied consistently and fairly. The following options will be considered:

- Immediate action to stop an incident of bullying in progress.
- Engagement with the bully to reinforce the message that their behaviour is unacceptable.
- Loss of lunch/break privileges.
- Official warnings to cease offending.
- Detention.
- Put on report.
- Removal from class/group.

- Withholding participation in sports or after school activities (if not an essential part of the school curriculum).
- Parents/carers informed.
- Adult mediation between the perpetrator and the victim (provided this does not increase the victim's vulnerability).
- After consultation with the Headteacher, exclusion from certain areas of school premises.
- Internal isolation.
- Minor fixed term exclusion after consultation with the Headteacher.
- Fixed term exclusion after consultation with the Headteacher.
- Involvement of external bodies such as the police.
- Permanent exclusion after consultation with the Headteacher.

Parents

Most concerns about bullying will be resolved through discussion between home and school. However, where a parent/carer feels their concerns have not been resolved, they are encouraged to use the formal Complaints procedure.

Where a pupil is involved in bullying others outside school, i.e. in the street or through the use of internet at home, parents/carers will be asked to work with the school in addressing their child's behaviour, for example, restricting/monitoring their use of the internet or mobile phone.

Referral of the family to external support agencies will be made where appropriate.

Promotion of this Policy

This policy and the methods for reporting bullying concerns will be promoted throughout the school, for example in information packs for new pupils and staff and through regular awareness raising activities with existing pupils and parents/carers. Pupil surveys will be carried out in each Year group.

Links with other policies

This policy must be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Policy for Outstanding Conduct and Behaviour
- Policy for E-Safety