



# Notley High School & Braintree Sixth Form

## Anti-Bullying Policy

<b>Last reviewed:</b>	March 2024
<b>Next review due:</b>	March 2025
<b>Ratified Full Governors:</b>	March 2024
<b>Designated Postholder:</b>	Deputy Headteacher

## 1. Policy Aim

This policy forms a part of the school's overall Behaviour and Discipline Policy. The aim of the antibullying policy is to ensure that students learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will students be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available at school.

Bullying is defined as:

*Behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power.*

Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or social media), and can sometimes be motivated by prejudice against particular groups, including on the grounds of protected characteristics. It might be motivated by actual or perceived differences between students. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously the school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical, and the school will work to make judgements in each specific case.

## Signs of Bullying

Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences, unexplained weight loss or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school. In all instances Notley High School and Braintree Sixth Form will encourage students to discuss their concerns with other members of the school community, be that in person, or through our electronic reporting system (an icon on all PCs in the school where concerns can be reported to key staff). The whole school community, therefore, must be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly with issues as they arise.

Types of Bullying include:

- Physical – Pushing and shoving, tripping up, kicking, spitting.
- Emotional – Humiliating someone, name calling, using insulting names or comments.
- Indirect – Spreading rumours whether true or not.
- Cyber bullying – Any form of bullying using a mobile phone or the internet, such as social networking sites, instant messaging or email.
- Driven by a prejudice – This might be homophobia, biphobia and transphobia, racism, sexism, or victimising those who have special needs or disabilities. It may be picking on a student because they are cared for away from home or it may be picking on a student who cares for a sick relative.

It may also be bullying when:

- The same person or group always leaves someone out or shuns them.
- Someone makes threats of violence against someone else.
- Someone damages someone else's kit or clothing deliberately.
- Someone takes someone else's belongings deliberately.
- Someone tries to force someone else to do something they do not want to do.

- Someone tries to force another to do something sexual they do not want to do.

Although all of these actions are serious and adults should always intervene, they may not always be regarded as bullying unless they are part of an on-going pattern of behaviour against the victim. In the first instance it is not a requirement for members of the school to investigate whether bullying is occurring but rather to accept the student's perception and jointly agree a way to go forward with them, which will reduce and ultimately eliminate their difficulties.

## 2. Implementation

Each case will be treated individually and depending on circumstances, one or more of the following strategies will be employed.

### Staff

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with at the earliest opportunity by the member of staff who has first been involved.
- A clear account of the incident will be recorded centrally by the Raising Standards Leader, who will agree an appropriate response with senior staff.
- The appropriate person will interview/counsel all concerned and will record the incident.
- Parents/carers of students involved to be kept informed.
- Measures to stop the behaviour will be used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties concerned.
- Any sanctions, interventions and outcomes will be recorded on the central log so that all Pastoral Middle Leaders are aware of the outcome.
- Involvement of appropriate outside agencies may be sought.
- Regular monitoring and tracking by the tutor or Raising Standards Leader will occur after the incident to ensure that it is not continuing. Oversight of this monitoring will be carried out by the Deputy Headteacher.

### Students

Students **who have been bullied** will be supported by some of the following:

- A staff group who are receptive to the student's position and don't seek to take responsibility for action away from the student (when questioned independently students cite staff taking control as one of the main reasons for not reporting incidents).

- An offer of an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a tutor or trusted adult within the school community of their choice.
- Counselling within school through the school's own counsellor.
- An offer of continuous support and reassurance to the student
- Opportunities to restore self-esteem and confidence.
- Use of the "consensual" model to change behaviour ("no blame approach") and/or a mediated meeting.
- Opportunities to work with peer mentors within school
- Safe areas to go to if the student feels vulnerable at particular times in the school day.

Students **who have bullied** will be supported by some of the following:

- Discussing what happened/why the student became involved.

- Opportunities to discuss their concerns with the school counsellor.
- Establishing their wrongdoing and need to change.
- Use of the “consensual” model to change behaviour (“no blame approach”) and/or a mediated meeting.
- Informing parents/carers to help change the attitude of the student.

The following disciplinary steps may also be taken:

- Verbal and written warnings.
- Community sanctions in school.
- Removal of privileges/activities.
- Detention.
- Exclusion from certain areas of school premises.
- Removal of access to social areas
- Fixed-term exclusion/permanent exclusion.

### **Curriculum**

Students will have opportunities to develop their understanding of the nature of bullying, to explore their own and others attitudes to bullying and to develop the skills to deal with bullying through PD lessons (Personal Development) and other subject areas and through assemblies, tutor time and other school activities, such as Anti-Bullying week which takes place annually in November, Safer Internet Day and other themed events and curricular focuses including tutor group anti-bullying pledges. Students will have opportunities to share their views regularly through surveys and student voice.

### **Adults**

- Adults at the school also have a right to work free from bullying and the philosophy of this policy applies to all members of the school community.
- Any adult who feels they are being bullied should be encouraged to discuss the issue with their Line Manager or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

### **Visitors**

- Visitors to the school are provided with information of what to do if they have any concerns about a child and asked to report these concerns to staff.

## **3. Legal framework**

### **The Education and Inspections Act 2006**

There are a number of statutory obligations on schools with regard to behaviour which establish clear responsibilities to respond to bullying. In particular section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006:

- Provides that every school must have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst students. These measures should be part of the school’s behaviour policy which must be communicated to all students, school staff and parents.
- Gives head teachers the ability to ensure that students behave when they are not on school premises or under the lawful control of school staff.

## **The Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 replaces previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. A key provision is a new public sector Equality Duty, which came into force on 5 April 2011. It replaces the three previous public sector equality duties for race, disability, and gender, and also covers age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Duty has three aims. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. Schools are now required to comply with the 2010 Equality Duty. The Act also makes it unlawful for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a student or potential student in relation to admissions, the way it provides education for students, provision of student access to any benefit, facility or service, or by excluding a student or subjecting them to any other detriment. In England and Wales the Act applies to all maintained and independent schools, including Academies and Free Schools, and maintained and non-maintained special schools.

## **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 may have been committed they should seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communication Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the “sender.”

## **Bullying outside school premises**

Head teachers have a specific statutory power to discipline students for poor behaviour outside of the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives head teachers the power to regulate students' conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre. Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and acted on. The head teacher should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or antisocial behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a student. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

## **Cyber-bullying**

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a medium for ‘virtual’ bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content easily. The wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011

give teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones.

### **Generative artificial intelligence (AI)**

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Bard.

Notley High School & Braintree Sixth Form recognises that AI has many uses to help pupils learn, but may also have the potential to be used to bully others. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.

Notley High School & Braintree Sixth Form will treat any use of AI to bully pupils in line with our Anti-Bullying Policy

#### **4. Training**

- There will be regular training for all members of the school community as appropriate.
- Regular training for new staff will include information on this policy.

#### **5. Monitoring, evaluation and review**

- The school will review this policy every two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

This policy is linked directly to the following policies:

- Behaviour and Discipline Policy.
- Child Protection Policy.
- Equal Opportunities (Race Equality, Disability Equality, SEN policies).
- Transgender Inclusion Policy
- Exclusions Policy.