CHRIST'S HOSPITAL

PUPIL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Aim

1. The aim of this policy is to state the School's position with regard to bullying (including cyberbullying), to explain what action the School takes to prevent bullying in any form and to explain the procedures to be followed in the event of a reported bullying incident.

Introduction

2. At Christ's Hospital, our community is based on 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 his/her full potential. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed; but orderly atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other.

3. Christ's Hospital prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting the School in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that at both School and home there are consistent expectations of behaviour and that we co-operate closely together. Acceptance of this policy forms part of our standard terms and conditions.

4. Bullying, harassment and victimisation and discrimination 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. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable.

5. This policy has been drafted with reference to The Equality Act 2010 and DFE Preventing and Tackling Bullying; Advice for Head teachers, staff and governing bodies as well as the DFE document, ‘Cyberbullying: Advice for Head teachers and School Staff’.

The School’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy must be referenced in relation to this:

Definition of bullying

6. Bullying may be defined as the intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another person by physical (including sexual), verbal (including via social media sites and SMS messages), and emotional means (by excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours) that is repeated over time. Time is quite a subjective notion; the idea is that bullying is not the instant reaction to something. It can involve manipulating a third party to tease to 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.

7. Bullying may involve actions or comments that are racist, cultural, homophobic, transphobic, or which focus on disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape). Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time and can cause psychological damage. We always treat it very seriously. It conflicts sharply with the School’s policy on equal opportunities, as well as with its social and moral principles.

Please see the Equality and Diversity Policy

Signs of bullying

8. 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 going missing, or being damaged;
• changes to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary);
• diminished levels of self-confidence;
• frequent visits to the Medical Centre with symptoms such as stomach pains and 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 and talking of suicide or running away.

9. 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.

Preventative measures

10. All pupils sign up to the Christ’s Hospital Community Charter at the start of each academic year. This Charter sets out clearly the need for respect between all members of the School community. The Charter is prominently displayed in every boarding house, building and classroom and referred to when necessary to remind pupils/staff of expectations of behaviour/conduct.

11. This policy is reinforced regularly:

• we use appropriate assemblies, tutorials and PSHE lessons to explain the School’s policy on bullying. Our PSHE programme 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 and what action to take if pupils believe someone is being bullied. The School calendar, issued each term, also includes the Christ’s Hospital Anti-Bullying Code;
• other lessons, particularly Theology and Philosophy, English and Drama highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable and by developing social skills;
• all our pupils are encouraged to tell a member of staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place;
• staff are regularly trained, know their legal responsibilities and know the School’s policy on how to deal with bullying;
• all reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents;
• we have a strong and experienced pastoral team of tutors, Heads of Year, and house parents, who support the Deputy Heads and are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority, and are alert to the possible signs of bullying;
• our pastoral team gives support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents;
• our trained counsellors are an important part of our pastoral support service, providing specialist skills of assessment and counselling. They are available to give confidential advice and counselling support to pupils who can refer themselves to them when they have social, emotional or behavioural concerns. On occasion, a member of our pastoral team may also refer a pupil to one of the School’s counsellors;
• the School Chaplain will give support and guidance to pupils of all faiths who are able to refer themselves to him/her; perhaps at a time of family break-up, sickness or bereavement the Chaplain will provide confidential advice and seek to encourage the development of tolerance, understanding and respect for others in the Christ’s Hospital community;
• 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 and are aware of pupils who may be vulnerable and at risk from bullying;

- in boarding houses, there are strong teams of tutors, supporting the houseparents and the matrons, who act in loco parentis. The informal house environment is important in reinforcing a pupil's standards and values providing the opportunity for friendly, informal discussion of matters of concern to the individual pupil outside the formal classroom. We encourage close contact between the houseparents and parents/guardians, and would always make contact if we were worried about a pupil's well-being;
- our Medical Centre and all our boarding houses display advice on where pupils can seek help, including details of confidential helplines and websites connecting to external specialists such as Childline, Kidscape, Get Connected and Samaritans who operate a peer counselling service;
- staff are especially alert to the needs of particularly vulnerable pupils; this is communicated through the Acute Concern List weekly update and reinforced verbally at the weekly staff briefing;
- staff are also aware of pupils on the SEND list;
- all pupils have access to a telephone, enabling them to call for support in private;
- we operate a “peer mentoring” scheme, whereby trained older pupils are encouraged to offer advice and support to younger pupils. They can be identified by wearing a yellow wristband and their photos are displayed around site and in the boarding houses. A School monitor (prefect) is also given responsibility for overseeing the work of the peer mentors and they meet regularly with the Deputy Head to discuss issues which may have arisen and advice given. Peer mentors and School monitors receive child protection training as part of their induction programme;
- we provide leadership training to our Senior Grecian and Second Monitor and their team of monitors, house captains and senior pupils which specifically covers child protection training and the importance of offering support and assistance to younger and vulnerable pupils;
- we have achieved the Rainbow Flag Award; this involves a coordinated approach of education to staff, parents and pupils concerning HBT (homophobic, bisexual and transgender) bullying and a wider awareness of LBGT+ issues. This is through PSHE, the curriculum, staff training, parental communication and pupil voice forums.
- The Pupil Wellbeing Committee is in place to put pupils at the heart of the messaging across the School and ensure that issues raised in assemblies, chapels, tutorials and PSHE lessons are relevant and pupil driven,
- we have banned initiation ceremonies designed to cause pain, anxiety or humiliation;
- we reserve 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; and
- we welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures.

Online bullying – definition

12. Bill Belsey, the creator of the website: 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.”

13. Online bullying can involve: social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter, emails and mobile phones used for SMS messages and as cameras.

Online bullying – preventative measures

14. In addition to the preventative measures described above, Christ's Hospital:

- expects all pupils 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;
- may impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet;
• issues all pupils with their own School email address. Access to sites such as “hotmail” is not allowed;
• adheres to the BECTA guidelines regarding e-teaching and the internet;
• offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and online bullying in PSHE lessons, which covers blocking and removing contacts from “buddy lists”;
• 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 washing and changing areas (or in the bedrooms of boarding houses).

The above points should be read in reference to the ICT code of conduct for pupils – acceptable use.


Procedures for dealing with reported bullying

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

• the member of staff to whom it was reported will control the situation;
• he/she will inform an appropriate member of the pastoral team as soon as possible;
• the member of staff will calmly explain the range of disciplinary measures that are potentially involved;
• the victim will be interviewed on his/her own and asked to write an account of events;
• the bully, together with all others who were involved, will be interviewed individually and asked to write an immediate account of events;
• the incident should be recorded in writing, signed and dated;
• all tutors, houseparents Heads of Year and the Deputy Head should be informed. In very serious incidents, the Head Teacher should be informed;
• the alleged bully will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the victim and it will be made clear why his/her behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. The pupil will be offered guidance on modifying their behaviour, together with any appropriate disciplinary sanctions;
• the parents/guardians of all parties should be informed and where appropriate, invited to the School to discuss the matter. This is usually after the investigation and often after any disciplinary action has been taken;
• a way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and counselling, should be agreed. This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for children who are being bullied and for pupils who bully others, as well as dealing with appropriate disciplinary measures. This would most likely take the form of a ‘Positive Behaviour Management’ session;
• a meeting involving all parties, with close staff supervision, could be helpful in developing a strategy for all concerned to close the episode;
• the ongoing situation will be closely monitored;
• in very serious cases and only after the Head Teacher has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the police or to the Social Services. However, it is the policy of Christ’s Hospital to attempt to resolve such issues internally, under the School’s own disciplinary procedures, unless the matter is of such gravity that there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm; and
• should bullying behaviour persist after all strategies have been employed and failed, the pupil/s concerned will be asked to leave the School.

Where bullying is witnessed, either first hand or via CCTV footage, there will often be a swifter resolution; prompt action may well be needed if deemed appropriate.
Other allied, relevant policies:

- Rewards and Sanctions
- ICT Code of Conduct for pupils
- Code of Conduct for Staff
- Code of Conduct for Pupils
- Equality and Diversity policy

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