



# IPSWICH SCHOOL

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Ipswich School's anti-bullying policy aims to ensure that all its pupils feel safe and happy within our school community. Its objectives are that:

- pupils, parents and staff understand what constitutes bullying in its various forms;
- pupils, parents and staff know that bullying will not be tolerated within the school community;
- staff know the ways in which they can help reduce or prevent bullying occurring;
- staff understand how to respond to, and record, bullying incidents, and apply the necessary sanctions;
- staff and parents are able to work together to safeguard victims of bullying and help the pupils causing the bullying to learn from their experience.

The Ipswich School Anti-Bullying Policy incorporates the DFE guidance from *Preventing and tackling bullying (Revised July 2017)* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>. It is available to all parents and pupils on the Ipswich School website and pupils regularly receive updates on the acceptable treatment of their peers from staff in a variety of forums.

Ipswich School complies with The Equality Act 2010 which has 3 aims. It requires the School to have regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimization 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; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The Equality Act makes it unlawful for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimize a pupil or potential pupil in relation to admissions, the way it provides education for pupils, provision of pupil access to any benefit, facility or service, or by excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.

### WHAT CLASSES AS BULLYING?

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, culture, special educational needs and/or disability (SEND), gender,

sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously the School's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical bullying. Ipswich School will make its own judgements about each specific case.

Under the Education Act 2011, Ipswich School staff may search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones.

Ipswich School pupils have drawn up their own Code of Conduct. It outlines the ways in which they should show respect for each other, and it specifically states that *"we should be prepared to prevent or report bullying."*

## **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

Under the Children Act 1989, a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Where this is the case, the school staff should report their concerns to their local authority children's social care. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, schools may need to draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

## **HOW CAN STAFF HELP PREVENT BULLYING?**

It is very unlikely that bullying can be eliminated. However, research in a number of schools suggests that its incidence can be significantly reduced by a combination of:

- a clear message that *"we shall try to help someone who is being bullied"* (clearly the opposite of the *"he deserves it"* view);
- proper supervision of pupils by vigilant staff who are on the lookout for bullying;
- an environment where pupils are actively encouraged to tell someone if they are being bullied or if they see someone else being bullied.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and acted on. The Headmaster will also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or other appropriate agencies of the actions taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could pose a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

Staff should constantly be on the lookout for bullying, and conversant with the school's anti-bullying policy, and the school undertakes to ensure that existing staff are regularly reminded of their responsibilities and that new staff receive training in this area as part of their induction. The training covers clear guidelines on what is acceptable and what is not, giving examples of good practice. Appropriate sanctions are discussed and reference is also made to the Child Protection and Safeguarding Children Policy and procedures.

A bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

The following attempts to identify some areas where staff could help with some or all of the issues outlined above:

## **1. Lessons/Games**

- All staff should make every effort to arrive on time for lessons and games sessions. This reduces the likelihood of bullying which often occurs when groups of pupils are unsupervised with little to do.
- Staff should be vigilant on the matter of name-calling of pupils and actively discourage it. This may lead to a member of staff stopping a lesson to make a point about an unpleasant remark which has been overheard. Simply ignoring a nasty comment suggests that it is considered acceptable.
- Clearly, the right atmosphere is created by staff who set a good example by acting consistently and fairly towards the pupils and who take an interest in their pastoral welfare.
- Staff should be alert for pupils who are unhappy, and encourage an atmosphere in which individuals will feel confident about talking openly with staff.
- Staff can pre-empt problems caused by pupils feeling left out by carefully supervising the picking of pairs/groups for work in class or teams on the games field.
- The pupils themselves feel that teachers can alleviate problems by allocating set places for the members of their classes rather than allowing the pupils themselves to choose.

## **2. General supervision, including formal duty**

- Staff should be vigilant and aware of any signs which might indicate bullying. The policy must be to intervene quickly and decisively. It is better to get involved too early than too late. Simply walking past a scuffle or group acting suspiciously towards another pupil gives out the message that such behaviour is condoned not just by that member of staff but by the whole school.
- A visible staff presence in any area is extremely helpful, but in past surveys the pupils themselves have asked for extra vigilance in the tuck shop area and the areas near their lockers.
- Heads of House can help by giving prefects specific instructions regarding supervision and a general message about being vigilant and setting a good example.
- A staff or prefect presence in and around the changing rooms is likely to act as a deterrent to bullying; in recent years the changing rooms (along with buses) have seen the majority of any bullying which has occurred.
- Bullying on buses to and from school is a particular problem. Supervision by bus prefects is vital, and they must be specifically instructed to report incidents to senior members of staff.

## **3. Activities**

Running extra-curricular activities helps by providing something worthwhile for the pupils to do in their free time, thus reducing the problem caused by groups of pupils having nothing to do. In addition, it often leads to better relations between pupils and staff and may very well be the best opportunity for pupils to talk to someone about any problems they are having, including bullying.

## **4. Tutors**

Tutors should try to allow time for pupils to talk to them in a reasonably private environment. These individual conversations, as well as group discussions, are good opportunities to remind

pupils of the fact that the School actively encourages them to talk openly about bullying, and to emphasise that what they say will be taken seriously.

## 5. PSHE

Bullying is covered as a specific topic, as is the pupils' Code of Conduct. These sessions help set the tone for the pupils' attitudes towards these issues, but frequent reminders throughout the year are very important to keep the point fresh. In addition, any material used to illustrate bullying cases must be up to date.

The key point to emphasise is that pupils themselves should not tolerate bullying whether or not staff are around; instead, they should report it. If they are not comfortable talking to a member of staff, they should be encouraged to talk to Matron or a Peer Tutor; alternatively they could leave a note, perhaps at Reception or the School Office, which could even be anonymous.

Specific points which need to be made clear to pupils:

- If a group of pupils is playing a game or sharing a joke, it ceases to be a game/joke the moment that (just) one person fails to see it that way.
- Pupils who are tempted to bully others need to be made aware that, thereafter, they will always carry with them the results of their actions.
- Gossip is dangerous; everyone watching/listening is guilty of condoning what is being said, and so they should either walk away or challenge what's being said.
- When looking at the topic of 'friendships', pupils should be taught appropriate entry skills.
- It is essential in PSHE and in assemblies (see below) to make the point that all forms of cyber bullying will not be tolerated, whether or not this takes place on school grounds. The DFE has published two helpful documents about this topic, see *Cyberbullying: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff* and *Advice for parents and carers*. The advice for parents is equally useful for staff. Both publications can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>
- The School has appointed an Online-safety Officer to promote safe and responsible use of the internet via PSHE lessons.
- Other specific areas which need discussing are racist, sexual, homophobic and disability bullying.

## 6. Assemblies

On the first assembly of the school year, Ipswich School's Headmaster makes a point of addressing the whole school about bullying, emphasising that it has no place in our community and stressing that pupils are expected to tell someone if they are aware that bullying is taking place. At various stages during the year, section assemblies can go into this matter in more detail; getting pupils to run such assemblies (perhaps through drama) helps to ensure that the issue is not always led by staff.

## DEALING WITH REPORTS OF BULLYING INCIDENTS

### Our Initial Response

Pupils (or their parents) might choose any member of staff to talk to if they are being bullied, not necessarily someone in direct charge of their pastoral welfare. This means that all staff need to be aware of

what to do if they are contacted. Sensitivity right from the start, ie when the incident is reported, is paramount.

- Give them time to explain the situation and to state their/the child's case (if time is not available, arrange an alternative time at the earliest opportunity).
- Listen carefully and make notes, but pass no immediate judgement (ie try not to agree with what is being said).
- Make it clear that the problem will be treated seriously and looked into as a matter of urgency, but ask them to be patient as investigations might well take some time to complete.

**REMEMBER THAT THE WORST REACTION TO BEING TOLD ABOUT BULLYING IS TO DO NOTHING: INSTEAD WE NEED TO PURSUE THE MATTER VIGOROUSLY**

### **The Procedure for Preliminary Investigation**

If you judge that this is a matter you can deal with yourself, then proceed. Nevertheless, **always** inform the pupil's (Form) Tutor about the situation. They will be in a better position to know if further action is needed.

Lower School Form Tutors should **always** consult the Head of Lower School. Middle School Tutors should **always** consult their Head of House. In turn, Heads of House should **always** consult the Head of Middle School or the Head of Sixth Form. The Heads of Section will decide with them whether or not to carry out a fuller investigation.

In general, Tutors should be kept involved as much as possible.

All information and actions should be recorded on iSAMS.

### **The Procedure for a Fuller Investigation (usually by the Head of Section)**

- Speak to the victim; you may wish to obtain a written account of the problem. When getting a victim to disclose, the key phrase is *Low and Slow* (ie sit lower than them and take your time); have comfortable eye contact and perhaps give them something to fiddle with. It may help to have the conversation whilst doing something else.
- Speak to the alleged perpetrators, separately at first if more than one. Try not to be accusatory; instead try to get from them a recognition that the victim does indeed have a grievance. The next step is to try to obtain from them a further decision on what he/she can do to ease the problem. When (as is often the case) he/she makes a counter-allegation, stress that this will be dealt with but *separately*.
- The final stage is to speak to the perpetrators together (possibly with the victim) and decide the agreed course of action, how it should be monitored and what the punishment should be if the agreed course of action is not followed.

Parents of both the victims and the alleged perpetrator(s) should be kept informed and be encouraged to work with the School and the pupil to find a satisfactory resolution.

## **Recording and Use of Sanctions**

Many cases of bullying are 'first-time' incidents and so, as outlined above, there may be no formal sanction for the bully at this stage, although if the matter is serious, then sanctions are available (see below). It is the responsibility of the Head of Section to ensure that:

- if the initial contact was from the victim's parents, the school reports back to them;
- explanatory notes are placed on iSAMS;
- the pupils' (Form) Tutor(s) is/are informed.

If a pupil is found to be involved in a further instance of bullying, then the above procedure may well need to be repeated. In addition, the School's policy is that the parents of the pupil involved in bullying must be contacted at this stage, usually in writing, and the Headmaster informed. The full range of school sanctions is available, including a Friday detention or a Headmaster's Detention. In addition, the School's Policy on Discipline and Exclusions specifically states that bullying is an offence for which a pupil may be suspended or expelled.

## **Support for the Victim and/or the Pupil involved in Bullying**

Victims of bullying may well need support. One specific tactic is to try to teach them to ignore the bullying by fogging or deflecting, techniques which can actually be practised once they understand them.

Try to be positive, by showing victims that when they say something happens all the time it is probably not even happening every day.

In some circumstances, support from outside agencies may be needed.

At the very least, it is essential that the pupil involved in bullying learns from his/her experience. In exceptional circumstances, outside agencies may be involved, the most likely of which is some form of counselling, perhaps for anger management.

Ipswich School undertakes to review its Anti-Bullying Policy at least annually.

Reviewed June 2022

*The school policies referred to in this policy are available on the School's website:*

*<https://www.ipswich.school/about/key-information/policies/> and, for staff, on the Google Shared Drive – School Policies – School – Pupil Related Policies.*