



**NORTHGATE**  
*High School*

# Anti-Bullying Policy

Respect | Determination | Teamwork

**Review period:** Annual

**Review by:** Mr J Tunaley

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# Anti-bullying policy

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students so that they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at Northgate. If bullying does occur, all students should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a school where it is the right thing to tell. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell staff so we can support.

## 1. What is Bullying?

**1.1** Bullying is the abuse of power. It is the wilful and conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone else repeatedly or over a period of time and to put that person into a state of anxiety.

**1.2** Bullying can take the form of:

- Emotional (Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting)
- Physical (Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence)
- Verbal (Name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing)
- Cyber (All areas of the internet, such as email, social media platforms and text messaging)

And can relate to:

- Racist (Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures)
- Sexual (Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments)
- LGBT discrimination (focusing on the issue of sexuality)

**1.3** Signs and symptoms of bullying are important to look out for and Northgate staff are aware of the need to investigate if a student:

- Is frightened of walking to or from school
- Changes their usual routine for getting to or from school
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- Begins to fake illness during the school day to be sent home
- Is consistently buying food or drink for other students
- Has unexplained cuts and bruises
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying others
- Is frightened to say what is wrong
- Discloses that another student is bullying them

## 2. Prevention of Bullying

**2.1** At Northgate High School, we are committed not only to dealing with bullying but also to doing all we can to prevent it happening in the first place. We seek to build self-esteem in students and to develop tolerance of others through a variety of methods:

- We use curriculum time in Lower School PSHEE lessons to explore issues round bullying and consideration of other people's points of view, including the role of friendships, feelings and self-esteem.
- Tutors play an active role in overseeing the interaction of students in their tutor groups so that potential problems can be spotted and dealt with at an early stage.
- Relevant issues are further covered in the school's Tutorial programme.
- Bullying is a topic that is raised in year assemblies in order to highlight awareness of its potential to cause real harm and misery.
- We tackle bullying in a proactive manner through mentoring initiatives, where trained students offer support to their peers through a mentoring programme. (Anti-Bullying Ambassadors.)
- We offer the services of a Youth Worker (Middle School) and a Counsellor (Middle and Lower Schools) to support young people for whom bullying may be an issue
- We offer Restorative Justice and mediation.

- We make our policy openly available to parents/carers, e.g. via the school website.
- We signpost external support agencies

### **3. What to do if bullying takes place**

**3.1** If a student is being bullied they must:

- Report the bullying immediately to their tutor or a member of staff that they like and feel comfortable with, or talk to a mentor or member of staff about the problem. If students are uncomfortable going on their own either to see staff or to see their mentor, they should take along a friend to give support. All mentors have been fully trained regarding issues of confidentiality.
- Students should not allow themselves to be intimidated by threats from the bully of what will happen if they tell. They should feel confident that they will be protected.
- Students are advised to report cases of bullying sooner rather than later so that the situation can be dealt with before it gets out of hand.
- Students need to know that all reported incidents will be taken seriously and followed up.
- If any student thinks another is being bullied, they should report it immediately.
- Where cyberbullying has occurred, copies of the exchange should be kept and brought into school. A report should be made via the 'report abuse' buttons

**3.2** If a parent or carer is worried about a student being bullied they must:

- contact the school and ask to speak to the relevant form tutor, Pastoral Officer or Progress Director.
- not allow children to miss time from school if possible as this only defers the problem and does not help to deal with it

**3.3** If staff receive a disclosure that a student is being bullied they must:

- i. Listen to what they say.
- ii. Always take it seriously.
- iii. Record what the student tells him/her.
- iv. Pass the information on to the student's Pastoral Officer or Progress Director who will inform the tutor if another member of staff has highlighted the problem.
- v. Make it clear that the student has made the right decision by telling.
- vi. Explain to the student that total anonymity may not be possible.
- vii. Offer the possibility of counselling and support, which can be the Youth worker, Counsellor, or staff mentor of the young person's choice.
- viii. Highlight and offer the lunchtime clubs run by the Learning Support Department including: Friendship Club every lunchtime; individual mentors; Lower School girls group; Middle School girls group; Breakfast club and the FRIENDS course which addresses issues of anxiety. There is also a Friday Club for year 7 students to help them settle into school; it provides support and gives confidence.
- ix. Liaise with the Learning Support Department re appropriate courses and referral to appropriate interventions.

### **4. Procedures for dealing with an incident of bullying**

**4.1** It is vital that we do all we can to make sure that bullying is not allowed in our school and how we deal with incidents will show the whole school community how seriously we take this. Those in the pastoral team dealing with incidents of bullying should follow this procedure:

- Listen to what the victim has to say and make sure there is an accurate statement from them with all the relevant information including, location/time of incident, any potential witnesses.
- Communicate with home to confirm that an issue has been raised and that we are investigating/dealt with the issue.
- Speak to the person accused of bullying and take accurate statement.
- Speak to any witnesses that have been mentioned by the victim and perpetrator.
- In conjunction with the school's behaviour policy, decide upon appropriate sanctions and assess if restorative communication between the students would be fair and effective.
- Communicate with all the parents/carers involved.
- Record the incident and outcomes on pastoral logs.

## 5. Procedures for dealing with established case of bullying

- 5.1** If the concern raised is established as bullying in line with the definition in 1.1 then the following sanctions can be applied:
- Formal warning given to bully
  - Restorative justice and/ or mediation arranged between bully and victim if felt that this will be helpful
  - Punishment such as detention or time in the school Inclusion Room
  - Letter and/or phone call to parents/carers of bully
  - Communication with the school's police liaison officer for advice and guidance.
  - Exclusion – a last resort for persistent bullying, but one that both students and parents/carers need to be aware of.
- 5.2** Bullies who have a genuine problem, often to do with self-esteem, should also be given support and counselling where this is felt to be appropriate. Tackling the root cause of the bullying may well be the best way to prevent it happening in the future. It is also important that the victim and the victim's parents/carers are kept informed of what is happening and the conclusion so that confidence is instilled in the efficacy of our systems.

## 6. Cyberbullying

- 6.1** As a school community, we are committed to talking openly about cyberbullying, and encouraging students and parents/carers to report instances to us. Cyberbullying may constitute an offence against the Malicious Communications Act, and in appropriate cases will mean the school involving the police or cybercrime investigation team.
- 6.2** The DFE's **advice on cyberbullying** (April 2017) acknowledges that 'The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyberbullying 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 at a click.
- 6.3** Being aware of the threat posed by cyberbullying, Northgate has clear rules in place regarding the use of equipment, software and network access provided by the school for the use of staff and students – for example, laptops, Virtual Learning Environments, and internet access. We also have clear rules regarding student-owned equipment such as mobile phones, digital cameras, and laptops
- 6.4** We have a clear code of acceptable behaviour for staff and students regarding the use of technology which includes behaviour outside of school – for example teachers' and students' use of social networking services and other sites – insofar as harming others and bringing the school into disrepute are concerned.
- 6.5** Cyberbullying is a live and ongoing issue and the school recognises the importance of treating it very seriously indeed. Students and parents/carers are encouraged to report cases of cyberbullying just as they would any other perceived examples of bullying.

## 7 Bullying outside the school premises

- 7.1** Teachers have the power to discipline students for misbehaviour outside the school premises "if it would be reasonable for the school to regulate students' behaviour in those circumstances" (DFE: Preventing and Tackling bullying March 2017). Therefore, as a school, we have the right to deal with bullying that goes on outside the school grounds e.g. incidents that occur on the home/school route or cyberbullying. If bullying outside the school is reported, the school should therefore do the following:
- In extreme or persistent cases, or if there are likely to be repercussions in school, advise the student's parents/carers to contact the police.
  - Speak to the students involved (and warn them where necessary) even though the incident has not taken place on school property.
  - Liaise with parents/carers concerning students who are frightened about leaving the school premises or concerned about internet/text messaging communication.
  - Talk to students about how to avoid or handle bullying outside the school premises.
  - Talk to the local police or school community Police Officer about problems on local streets.
  - Talk to the bus company about problems on buses.
  - Inform the police directly in the cases of physical/verbal threats and/or threatening text/cyber communication.