CRANLEIGH
SCHOOL
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Anti-bullying/cyberbullying policy and guidelines

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POLICY STATEMENT

This policy applies to all pupils and staff at the School, irrespective of their age, and whether or not a pupil is in the care of the School when bullying behaviour occurs. Our commitment is to provide a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment where every individual feels valued and respected. We believe that everyone in our community has the right to live and learn without fear of being bullied. Every individual in the School has a duty to report an incident of bullying, whether it happens to themself or to another person.

Through the operation of this policy, we aim to:

- **Foster a positive and supportive culture** that prioritises the well-being of all pupils.
- **Proactively deter, effectively detect, and decisively address all forms of bullying**, using restorative and/or disciplinary means in line with the School's Behaviour and Discipline Policy.
- **Promote a culture of respect and empathy** where unkind and discriminatory behaviour is never tolerated.

Bullying behaviour is always unacceptable and will not be tolerated because:

1. It is a form of peer-on-peer abuse that is harmful to the target, the perpetrator, and those who witness it.
2. It interferes with a pupil's right to enjoy their learning and leisure time free from intimidation and harm.
3. It is contrary to the fundamental aims, values, and ethos of the School.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying is defined as the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another, where the relationship involves a **significant imbalance of power**. It can be physical, verbal, or psychological and can happen face-to-face or online.

There are four key elements to this definition:

1. **Hurtful behaviour**
2. **Repetition**
3. **Power imbalance:** This can result from a difference in age, physical size, social status (e.g., seniority in a house or prefect status), intellectual ability, or influence within a social or online group.
4. **Intentionality**

Examples of bullying are:

- **Physical:** Hitting, kicking, pushing, spitting; or taking, damaging, or hiding possessions. This includes threats of violence.
- **Verbal:** Name-calling, taunting, teasing, insulting, homophobic, racist, or sexist remarks.
- **Sexual harassment:** Including sexually explicit comments, upskirting, or unwanted physical contact.
- **Emotional:** Intimidating, isolating, or excluding a person from a group, or spreading malicious rumours. This also includes indirect bullying, such as laughing along when an individual is being bullied.

The School strictly prohibits all forms of **initiation or hazing activities** within the boarding environment. Any conduct, whether physical, verbal, or psychological, that humiliates, intimidates,

coerces, or excludes others under the guise of initiation constitutes bullying and will be treated as a serious breach of the School's Anti-Bullying Policy.

Intention

Even if an act is perceived as "banter" or "teasing," if it causes distress, it is considered bullying. All such incidents are unacceptable and will be addressed.

SIGNS OF BULLYING

All staff should be vigilant for signs that a pupil may be experiencing bullying. These may be changes in behaviour, mental health, or well-being, including:

- Unwillingness or reluctance to attend school or engage in social activities.
- Excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn, or unusually quiet.
- A decline in academic performance or unexplained poor quality of work.
- Damaged or missing belongings.
- Frequent, stress-related physical complaints, such as headaches or stomach pains.
- Unexplained cuts and bruises.
- Repressed body language, low self-confidence, or poor eye contact.
- Sleep disturbance or nightmares.
- Self-harming behaviours, suicidal ideation, or talk of running away.

CREATING AN ANTI-BULLYING CULTURE

Ethos: All members of the School community are expected to uphold the School Conventions. Any pupil or member of staff who witnesses or hears of an incident of bullying is required to report it immediately. All complaints will be taken seriously.

Equal Opportunities: The School fosters positive attitudes and inclusivity toward all individuals, actively addressing and treating any discriminatory words or behaviour as unacceptable.

Staff Responsibilities: All staff have a statutory duty to safeguard pupils and are expected to promote an anti-bullying culture by:

- Modelling positive behaviour and providing opportunities for pupils to be heard.
- Being vigilant for any signs of bullying.
- Utilising the Rewards and Sanctions process fairly.
- All staff will receive mandatory, **annual training** in safeguarding and anti-bullying awareness.

Pupil Responsibilities: Pupils are taught that bullying will not be tolerated. They are encouraged to celebrate the achievements of others, feel able to share problems with staff, and use the clear reporting mechanisms available to them.

PROCEDURES

Initial complaint

Any member of staff who receives an allegation of bullying behaviour <u>must first</u> offer immediate advice, support, and reassurance to the pupil who has disclosed the concern.

Immediately report the allegation to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Inform the Housemaster/Housemistress of the pupils involved.

The DSL and Housemaster/Housemistress will then work together to address the concern, ensuring that other pupils involved are also safe and supported.

Assessment

The DSL or a senior member of the Safeguarding Team will conduct an assessment of the allegation to determine its nature, severity, and context. This will include:

- Interviewing the target, perpetrator, and any witnesses.
- Securing and preserving any digital evidence.
- Considering the power imbalance and the impact on the target's well-being and education.
- Involving external agencies, such as Social Services or the police, if the alleged behaviour is a criminal offence or constitutes significant harm.

Range of action

When a complaint is upheld, the School will take a range of actions to address the harm and prevent recurrence. Responses may include one or more of the following:

Restorative interventions

Supervised meetings between the pupils involved to repair harm and promote understanding.

Support

Providing ongoing counselling and support for both the target and the perpetrator.

Educational sanctions

Mandating attendance at educational sessions on topics such as empathy, consent, and online safety.

Disciplinary sanctions

A formal warning, suspension, or, in cases of severe or persistent bullying, permanent exclusion.

Parental involvement

The parents of all involved pupils will be informed of the incident and the action being taken, in a timely manner, unless this would place a pupil at risk of further harm.

Digital actions

Requiring the perpetrator to remove offensive material, informing parents to monitor their child's online activity, and/or reporting the content to the relevant social media platform or the police.

Monitoring and Review

The position will be monitored for as long as necessary. The DSL and Safeguarding Team will review all incidents to ensure consistency and identify patterns. The Headmaster and Safeguarding Governor will be informed of all serious incidents.

CYBERBULLYING AND ONLINE ABUSE

This is a specific type of bullying that uses any form of information and communications technology to deliberately harm, harass, or intimidate another person. Unlike physical bullying, a cyber-bully can remain anonymous, and technology allows the perpetrator to act from an unknown location at any time, which can have a more severe psychological impact on the target.

Examples of cyberbullying and online abuse include:

- **Harassment:** Sending offensive, rude, or insulting messages via any digital platform.
- **Denigration:** Sending fake, damaging, or untrue information about another person, including altering photos/videos.
- **Impersonation:** Using someone's online identity to send or post vicious material.
- **Outing and Trickery:** Sharing a person's private information or images, or tricking someone into revealing secrets.
- **Exclusion:** Intentionally leaving someone out of an online group or game.
- **Revenge Porn:** The non-consensual sharing of private, sexual materials.
- **Online Grooming:** The abuse of trust for sexual purposes.

The School employs robust filtering and monitoring systems to ensure that online activity is safe and that any suspicious searches or online risks are flagged for review by the Safeguarding Team. All staff will receive mandatory, **annual training** in safeguarding and anti-bullying awareness, which includes a specific focus on online safety and abuse.

CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE

Bullying is a form of child-on-child abuse and can be a standalone incident or part of a wider pattern of harm. It can occur inside and outside of school and online. It is often motivated by prejudice against protected characteristics or perceived differences, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, including a person's:

- Race, religion, culture, or ethnicity
- Gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity
- Disability or special educational needs and disability (SEND)
- Family circumstances (e.g., being adopted, in care, or having caring responsibilities)

Examples of child-on-child abuse also include:

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- Physical violence
- Sexual violence and harassment
- Emotional or psychological abuse
- Neglect or domestic abuse within a peer relationship

The DSL has statutory oversight of all safeguarding and abuse records. All incidents, regardless of severity, are recorded on the Pastoral Module. This system allows for patterns to be identified and ensures consistency in our response. The records are kept securely and confidentially.

EXTERNAL SUPPORT FOR TARGETS

If you are a target of bullying or abuse, please remember that it is never your fault. You can seek help and it can be stopped. In addition to the support available at school, you can contact the following external organisations:

Childline: 0800 1111 (free, confidential, 24-hour helpline). They also offer online support and have a wealth of resources on all forms of abuse.

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP): For advice on staying safe online and reporting online abuse.

The Diana Award: As a school committed to their Anti-Bullying Ambassador Programme, this is a trusted resource for advice and support.

Bullying UK (part of Family Lives): Provides advice and support for pupils and parents on all forms of bullying via a helpline, live chat, and an extensive online library of resources.

Stonewall: The leading LGBTQ+ rights charity in the UK. They provide confidential advice and support specifically for young people experiencing homophobic, biphobic, or transphobic abuse.

YoungMinds: A charity dedicated to the mental health and emotional well-being of young people. They offer a range of support and resources for those experiencing mental health issues as a result of abuse.

The Mix: Offers free, confidential support for young people under 25 on a wide range of issues, including abuse, mental health, and relationships. You can contact them via phone, text, or webchat.

Samaritans: If you are feeling overwhelmed or distressed, you can call their free, 24-hour helpline at 116 123.

Local police services: If the abuse includes physical violence, harassment, or other criminal activity, you can contact your local police station for advice and to report the crime.

RELATED POLICIES

This Anti-Bullying/Cyber-bullying Policy & Guidelines are a core component of the School's broader safeguarding framework. They should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy

Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy

Acceptable Use of ICT Policy

Complaints Policy

Whistleblowing Policy