



## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

*"The anti-bullying policy is posted on the School's web site and is available to all parents and prospective parents. A printed version of the policy can be supplied on request."*

### STATEMENT OF INTENT

At Altrincham Preparatory School, our community is based upon 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 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.

Altrincham Preparatory School prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting Altrincham Preparatory School in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together. Acceptance of this policy forms part of our standard terms and conditions.

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 and we acknowledge the seriousness of bullying in causing psychological damage and even suicide (although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour).

### RELATED POLICIES:

Behaviour Management policies  
Safeguarding policy  
Equal opportunities policy – contains statement re. racial discrimination  
Disability policy  
Special Education Needs (SEN) and Learning Difficulties Policy

### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

The aims of this policy are two-fold:

- The prevention of bullying at APS
- The handling of any case of bullying that might arise

Prevention: our policy tries to allow pupils to feel confident:

- to report bullying
- that incidents of bullying will be dealt with fairly

Handling of incidents: the school endeavours to:

- provide support for both the 'victim' and the 'bully' as well as their families
- ensure that due process is followed and written records are kept
- apply appropriate sanctions in order to discourage boys being unpleasant to one another and to improve interpersonal behaviour

## DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying may be defined as the intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another person by physical (including sexual), verbal (including chat room and SMS messages), and emotional means (by excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or 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.

Bullying may involve actions or comments that are racist, religious, homophobic, which focus on disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape). Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time. 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.

APS is conscious of the serious consequences that attend bullying incidents. These include psychological damage and even suicide.

## SIGNS OF BULLYING

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 go missing, or are damaged
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary)
- Diminished levels of self confidence
- Frequent visits to the Office with symptoms such as stomach pains, 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
- Talking of suicide or running away

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

We take the following preventative measures:

- We use appropriate Assemblies to explain the school 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.
- Other lessons, particularly RE and English, 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.
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents.
- We have a strong and experienced team of class teachers who support the Deputy Head and the phase leaders and are knowledgeable in handling any incidents as an immediate priority, and are alert to possible signs of bullying.
- Our Senior Management team give support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both victims and bullies.
- 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.
- Through our school council we operate a peer supportive scheme, whereby older pupils are encouraged to offer advice and support to younger pupils, particularly at playtimes.
- 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

- We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures.

### CYBERBULLYING – DEFINITION

Mr Bill Belsey, the creator of the web site: <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."

Cyberbullying can involve Social Networking Sites, like Bebo and Myspace, emails and mobile phones, used for SMS messages and as cameras.

### CYBERBULLYING – PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

In addition to the preventative measures described above, Altrincham Preparatory School:

- Expects all pupils to follow the guidance given for the safe use of the internet. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system.
- May impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet.
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying 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.
- Mobile phones are not permitted in the school. Boys who bring mobile phones to school following their parental wishes have to hand them into the Office at the beginning of the day and collect them on leaving school.

### PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH REPORTED BULLYING

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

- The member of staff to whom it was reported or who first discovers the situation, will control the situation, reassure and support the pupils involved.
- He/she will inform an appropriate class teacher 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 leader or member of the management team his 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.
- All class teachers, phase leaders should be informed. In very serious incidents, the Head Master and Deputy Head should be informed.
- The victim will be interviewed at a later stage by a phase leader or member of the management team, separately from the alleged perpetrator. It will be made clear to him why revenge is inappropriate. He will be offered support to develop a strategy to help himself.
- The alleged bully will be interviewed at a later stage by a leader or member of the management team, separately from the victim, and it will be made clear why his behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. He will be offered guidance on modifying his behaviour, together with any appropriate disciplinary sanctions.
- The parents/guardians of all parties should be informed and invited into school to discuss the matter. Their support should be sought.
- A way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and counselling, should be agreed. This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for the boys who are being bullied and for pupils who bully others, as well as dealing with appropriate disciplinary measures.
- A meeting involving all the parties, with close staff supervision, could be helpful in developing a strategy for all concerned to close the episode.
- A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place.
- In very serious cases, and only after the Head Master 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 Altrincham Preparatory School to

attempt to resolve such issues internally under the school's own disciplinary procedures, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely.

#### SANCTIONS:

Reference should be made to the Behaviour Management Policies for both the Junior School and EYFS/KS1.

Each case of bullying will be treated as a specific incident and the sanctions and road forward will be discussed with all involved parties. The sanction strategies that apply are as for those identified within our EYFS & KS1 and Junior School behaviour policies. The entry point into the sliding scale, however, will be determined by the details of the actual case under consideration. Consideration of the following sanctions will apply nonetheless:

- School detention
- Remaining in the classroom during playtimes
- Withdrawal from intra- and inter- school sports events and other activities such as school concerts, school visits and trips
- Temporary and permanent exclusion

#### REVIEW:

The Deputy Head, in consultation with the Senior Teacher and the phase leaders/middle management will review the records of bullying on a termly basis to enable patterns to be identified. These will inform our practice at APS.

**January 2010**

**Review April 2010**