Anti-Bullying Policy

2023 -2024

St Albans Independent College

Our Values

- To provide individual support to students in every aspect of their education and to help them prepare for their future.
- To provide an environment where students feel safe and their wellbeing is enhanced.
- To provide flexibility in subject choice within a broad, personalised and relevant curriculum.
- To support each individuals' personal development.
- To create an informal environment where students are comfortable in expressing their individuality and having respect for one another.
- To motivate and inspire students to succeed.

Our Approach

St Albans Independent College is built upon the principle that the best way for students to achieve their academic potential is by excellent teaching in small group classes and by structured personal support.

Teaching in small groups allows for the emphasis of the lesson to be on discussion and interaction. This requires students to engage more deeply with the subject matter and ensures that learning is monitored throughout. Students also find that this interactive approach helps them to develop their confidence as well as their knowledge and understanding.

Each student is supported in their studies by a Mentor who will monitor their efforts and achievements, and help motivate them to achieve their best. Although there is a strong academic ethos at the College, the environment is friendly and supportive.

St Albans Independent College continues to evolve and grow and is a thriving Independent College that provides over 20 subjects at GCSE and at A-level, to students from 14 to 19 years of age.
To this day we have remained true to our ethos on which the College was founded.

Policy Statement

St Albans Independent College is a community where we want to ensure that students are given opportunities to cultivate virtues to become happy, confident and well-rounded individuals who make meaningful contributions within the school community and the wider society. Mutual respect for each other underpin our philosophy. We are committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all our students, allowing all to learn in an atmosphere free of intimidation, denigration, violence, harassment and discrimination. Bullying is not acceptable or tolerated within such an environment and all of our staff are determined that any bullying allegations are responded to swiftly; thoroughly investigated and if substantiated, dealt with efficiently, robustly and with proportionate sanctions and interventions. We expect our staff to understand and be conversant with our stance on bullying and we will train staff appropriately. Any disciplinary response to bullying will take account of special educational needs, disabilities or extenuating circumstances that the pupils involved may have.

As Well as giving guidance and support to our students and staff all year round, as a college we also participate in **Anti-Bullying week** every year. This is to embed in our students that Bullying is not acceptable and to eradicate the suffer in silence mentality and give students a voice to report any kind of bullying.
By channelling our collective power, through shared efforts and shared ambitions, we can reduce bullying together.

Our 3-Step Framework

To ensure that every incident of bullying is dealt with as effectively and consistently as possible we follow the 3 steps below..

- STEP 1 - Safety of those directly involved
  Bullying can have a long lasting impact on a young person's mental health for those who are getting bullied, witnessing bullying and doing the bullying. That is why our first step is about securing and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of those involved.

- STEP 2 - Preventing the bullying from reoccurring
  Once we have secured the safety of those involved, the next step is about working with the group of individuals involved to prevent the bullying from reoccurring. Bullying is often a group behaviour. It rarely happens between two individuals in isolation. So it's important to consider the wider peer group at this stage.

- STEP 3 - School learning and reflection

This is an important step. It allows us to reflect upon our school practice to ascertain if there is anything we can do to prevent a similar situation in the future.

Aims of this policy

1. To set out a definition and examples of what might be termed 'bullying behaviour'.
2. To broadly identify how the college might respond to the aggressor and victim.
3. To indicate how information about bullying might be disseminated to students and staff.
4. To broadly indicate systems whereby staff and students will be trained to recognise and respond to bullying.
5. To outline the broad principles relating to monitoring and dealing with incidents of bullying.

USEFUL RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

parentzone.org.uk has established a training programme designed to enable schools and college professionals working with parents to deliver their own sessions on internet safety. They also

internetmatters.org/issues/cyberbullying/ is also a leading organisation on Internet safety with information and support for professionals, parents and students.

Nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk is a website that gives advice to professional, parents and students dealing with bullying

Anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk is also a very well known organisation that offers support and advice for parents, carers and education providers.

NSPCC gives a detailed guide and support for parents and staff.

WHAT IS BULLYING BEHAVIOUR?

We define bullying as a repeated or persistent attempt by one person or group to exert control in an anti-social and detrimental way over another person or group. Bullying behaviour is unpleasant and involves dominance and abuse of power. It is often but not necessarily pre-medicated and usually forms a sustained pattern of behaviour rather than being an isolated incident. As there are many forms of bullying, our policy is to examine each incident individually and decide on the appropriate action in each case.

Examples of the major different types of bullying are listed below:

- **Physical** – pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching etc.
- **Verbal** - name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling.
- **Emotional** – isolating others, tormenting, hiding books, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidating, excluding, manipulation and coercion.
- **Sexual** – unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films etc.
- **Online /cyber** – posting on social media, sharing photos, sending nasty text messages, social exclusion.
- **Prejudice** - homophobic, transphobic, racist, targeted at faith/religion, sexist, disablist.
- **Indirect** - Can include the exploitation of individuals.

It may also be classed as bullying when:

- the same person or group always leaves someone out or shuns them
- someone makes threats of violence against someone else
- someone damages someone else's possessions deliberately
- someone takes someone else's belongings deliberately
- someone tries to force someone else to do something they do not want to do someone tries to force another to do something sexual they do not want to do

VULNERABLE STUDENTS

As a College we understand that students may not always feel confident to report incidents of bullying directly and we actively encourage all students to use our **student Voice box** located at Victoria Street or speak to staff if they witness bullying by others. Staff are also regularly reminded to be alert to all types of bullying especially to those children who are more likely to be the target of bullying because of the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves. For example, those with special educational needs or disabilities, medical conditions or those with caring responsibilities or who are in care.

Preventing, identifying and responding to bullying

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is our first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical. (See ref: Preventing Bullying 2017, DFE).

The College community will:

- Regularly reinforce to staff and students that early intervention is vital in dealing with bullying as this can help to set clear expectations of behaviour that is and is not acceptable and to help stop negative behaviours escalating.
- Ensure the whole school community has an understanding of bullying and its consequences by constantly reinforcing the anti- bullying message through the curriculum, Anti-Bullying displays, through peer support and the College Council, during Anti-Bullying week
- Work with staff and outside agencies to identify all forms of prejudice-driven bullying
- Actively provide systematic opportunities to develop students' social and emotional skills, including their resilience through Personal Development.
- Train all teaching and support staff to identify bullying and follow College policy and procedures on bullying, including recording incidents of bullying on CPOMS
- actively create 'safe spaces' for vulnerable children and young people
- use a variety of techniques to resolve the issues between those who bully and those who have been bullied including referral to outside agencies e.g. Safer Schools Officer, Behaviour Support Service and Mentors
- Apply disciplinary measures fairly, consistently, and reasonably to show pupils who bully that their behaviour is wrong. While taking account of any special educational needs or, disabilities or vulnerabilities that the pupil may have
- Consider the motivations behind bullying behaviour and whether it reveals any concerns for the safety of the perpetrator. Where this is the case the child engaging in bullying may need support themselves

Involvement of students

Students have the following responsibilities:

- Intervening when someone is being bullied and making it clear to the bully that their actions are disapproved of
- Encourage pupils to report incidents of bullying to a member of staff they feel comfortable talking to
- Ensuring that previous victims of bullying are not isolated from groups of friends
- Regularly canvas children and young people's views on the extent and nature of bullying
- Ensure students know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying directly to staff, another pupil, the Safeguarding Team or using the Student Voice Box
- Ensure all students are aware of the range of sanctions which may be applied against those engaging in bullying
- Involve students in the College in anti-bullying campaigns as part of Anti-Bullying Week and Online Safety Week

- Publicise the details of the bullying help-lines on the internet and College notice boards. Offer support to students who have been bullied and to those who are bullied, in order to address the problems they have.

Responsibilities of staff

- To be alert and intervene to any potential incident of bullying particularly to our most vulnerable students
- To report any instances of bullying to the relevant safeguarding team unless the incident is minor and quickly resolved by the member of staff to the satisfaction of the victim
- The safeguarding or SLT is responsible for clarifying the facts of the incident through investigation and taking statements from the bully, any victims and witnesses
- The Headteacher / Assistant head, having clarified the facts, will inform all parents/carers of the incident, record the incident on CPOMS and liaise with the safeguarding Team regarding the sanction and if a referral is needed to the Safer School's officer or other outside agencies
- The Headteacher will ensure a written account of the incident is produced and recorded on CPOMS
- The SLT will monitor the victim and bully to ensure that the situation has been resolved and will seek to reconcile both parties if considered appropriate
- Identify and make safe areas in school where bullying could/has been known to occur
- Arrive on time for all duties so that appropriate supervision is undertaken across the whole school environment

Support for Staff who may be bullied

It is important that all schools and staff members take measures to protect themselves from bullying. It is equally important to make clear that bullying of staff whether by pupils, parents or colleagues is unacceptable. Any staff member that feels threatened or suspects bullying or cyber-bullying should report it straight away to the head teacher or to a senior member of staff.

DEFINITION OF CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices like mobile phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through SMS, Text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about

someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation

DEFINITION OF HARASSMENT

Harassment may be directed at an individual or a group. Under the [Equality Act 2010](#), harassment is defined as "unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual." As such, harassment related to a protected characteristic can be:

• **Ageist** - because of or focusing on age.
• **Disablist** - because of or focusing on disability.
• **Homophobic** - because of, or focusing on sexual orientation for example, outing someone as a lesbian or as gay to family and/or friends (whether they are or not), or denying that someone's sexual orientation exists.
• **Biphobic** - because of or focusing on the fact that someone identifies as bi. For example, negative stereotyping, such as suggesting that bisexual people are greedy, or implying that being bi is a phase.
• **Racist** - taunts, graffiti, or gestures due to a person's race, colour, nationality, ethnicity or ethnic or national origins.
• **Religion, or other belief based** - because of, or focusing on religious faith or belief.
• **Sexist** - because of or focusing on a person's sex.
• **Sexual** - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
• **Transphobic** - because of or focusing on a person's trans status. For example, using incorrect pronouns to humiliate someone, or denying that their gender identity exists.

FORMS OF BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

Bullying can range from extremes, such as violence, to less obvious forms, for example, deliberately ignoring someone. Whatever the form, it will be unwanted behaviour which is unwelcome and unpleasant and results in pain and distress to the victim.

WHERE CAN BULLYING HAPPEN?

Bullies often hide their behaviour and make threats. It can happen:

- On the way to, or back from school.
- In the student common room.
- In the toilets.
- In the classroom or corridors.
- Over the Internet/using social media.

Liaison with parents and carers

We will:

- Encourage parents to report any incidents of Bullying to the relevant member of staff and to be aware of and support the school's position on anti- bullying
- To work in partnership with the school should a case of bullying involve their child
- Conduct regular surveys with parents about bullying
- Ensure all parents know about our complaints procedure, where it is and how to use it effectively. This is known as the Complaints Procedure Policy and is available on the College website
- Ensure all parents / carers know where to access independent advice about bullying by including links to helplines on the College website
- Support parents on how to help their children engage safely and responsibly with social media, through information evenings and signposting to other sources of support and advice on the College website
- Work with all parents, the local community including other schools, the Police and the local police , to address issues beyond the College gates that may give rise to bullying. This includes cyber-bullying and bullying that occurs on the journey to and from College

SYMPTOMS OF CHILDREN BEING BULLIED

- Fall in attendance due either to illness of truancy.
- Truancy from particular lessons.
- Drop in the standard and amount of work being carried out by a pupil.
- Child appears withdrawn or depressed.
- Noticeable change in the behaviour of a child.
- Unfavourable changes in friendship groups
- The child not wishing to sit near another child.
- The child being fearful of moving around the school alone.

CRIMINAL LAW

While there is no legal definition of the term bullying, it is important to bear in mind that many behaviours which, in the school context, are called bullying, may be defined in law as threatening behaviour, criminal damage, theft, assault, sexual harassment or racial harassment. It is the right of pupils and parents to report such incidents to the police.

SCHOOL GUIDELINES

The college will take serious allegations of bullying and investigate appropriately keeping appropriate records.(CPOMS) We will strive to communicate appropriately with parents/carers of the aggressor and the victim.

HOW WE MAY DEAL WITH THE BULLY

- Ask them to apologise to the victim.
- Change seating in a classroom.
- Restrict the area they are allowed to be in, during school.
- Give special work, such as work about bullying and how it can hurt.
- Initiate a pastoral support plan and involve external agencies in supporting the student, so that they are contrite and change their behaviours.
- Use peer mentors to mentor the aggressor.
- Contact parents to ask for their intervention.
- Verbal warning
- Written warning
- Suspension.
- Permanent exclusion.

SUPPORTING THE ALLEGED PERPETRATOR

There is often an underlying reason for bullying behaviour. A bully can be very insecure and may:

- have been bullied themselves
- Suffered past trauma
- be afraid of becoming a victim to someone else
- want to be accepted into a certain group
- want to be well-known for their physical status
- have low levels of self-esteem and self-confidence

Support may be required to enable a bully to change their behaviour. Breaking patterns of behaviour and expectations of other students and staff may make them a victim to others. Bullies wishing to reform should be encouraged to seek help and advice from staff, mentors or be directed towards external support organisations such as ChildLine or Kooth.

A bully should be encouraged to change their behaviour and should not be intimidated, humiliated or made to feel uncomfortable when seeking support.

HOW WE DEAL WITH THE VICTIM

- They are encouraged to come forward to tell us about bullying issues and are supported in the process.
- We will listen and investigate what is reported.
- Students and parents will be encouraged to contact the Police and support agencies, if appropriate.
- The student will be encouraged to reconcile with the bully, if appropriate.

SUPPORTING THE VICTIM

- Provide support within the college
- Encourage the student to engage in counselling should they request or require it

HOW WE TRY TO DEAL WITH BULLYING ISSUES AND GENERAL/PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

- Ensuring a senior member of staff has overall responsibility for overseeing 'anti-bullying'.
- By empowering parents to come forward to discuss any concerns and seek their cooperation and support in putting in place measures to prevent bullying in the future.
- Timetabling lessons with bullying issues – Mentors use meeting time to reinforce the Anti-bullying Policy.
- By directing resources to supervising students around the school.
- Bullying is covered in Personal Development & RSE/ schemes of work.
- Creating a 'tell an adult immediately' culture in the college.
- Anti-bullying signage around the School
- Staff trained every two years to recognise and deal with bullying.
- Staff to log all reports of bullying incidents and the subsequent investigation so that records are available indicating patterns of behaviour. - CPOMS
- Peer mentoring scheme to encourage younger students to talk to those more senior.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our **Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding Policy** and our **Complaints Policy** which facilitates complaints from parents and carers.

Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2023.pdf

Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf

Cyberbullying_Advice_for_Headteachers_and_School_Staff_121114.pdf

education-act-2002-/about-this-guidance

Reviewed by: Mr A Jemal (Principal)

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