

STUDENT ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

RESPONSIBILITY:	LEARNING & ACHIEVEMENT COMMITTEE
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PROPOSED BY:	TRACY BECKWITH
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TYPE OF POLICY:	STATUTORY
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DATE AGREED BY LEARNING & ACHIEVEMENT COMMITTEE:	7 MAY 2015
FREQUENCY OF REVIEW:	3 YEARLY
NEXT REVIEW:	MAY 2018

APPROVED BY:	FULL GOVERNING BODY
DATE APPROVED AND ISSUED:	18 MAY 2015
SIGNATURE:	 CHAIR OF GOVERNORS

In reviewing this policy, the Learning & Achievement Committee has taken into account the provisions of the Equality Policy 2012



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Policy Statement

At Vandyke Upper School:

- we will not tolerate any form of verbal, physical or psychological bullying or “cyber” bullying
- all staff will do their best to prevent bullying and will share responsibility for action if bullying does occur
- all incidents will be investigated in a firm and fair manner
- parents/carers, governors and outside agencies may be involved in any course of action

Defining Bullying

The school has adopted the DfE definition of bullying. It is behaviour to others that is:

- deliberately hurtful
- repeated often and over a period of time (persistent)
- difficult for the victim to defend themselves against
- an abuse of power

Principles

At Vandyke we believe that “Everyone Matters”. All students and staff have the right to enjoy and achieve within a safe and positive school environment. The school adopts the two underlying principles of the ‘Protective Behaviours’ ethos and approach.

- Everyone has the right to feel safe all of the time.
- There is nothing too terrible that you cannot talk to someone about it.

It is these principles that underpin Vandyke’s approach to bullying.

Introduction

“*Sticks and stones may break my bones ...*” the saying goes. An anti-bullying poster recently completed the phrase “... *and words they also hurt me*”.

We are determined to challenge all forms of bullying. All incidents will be investigated in a firm and fair manner. We will do all we can to support those who are targeted by bullying.

Thank goodness bullying can now be openly talked about. All schools suffer from bullying and Vandyke does not claim to be an exception. What we are determined to do is to vigorously challenge all forms of bullying. All incidents are investigated in a firm and fair manner. We do all we can to support victims and believe in working with bullies to address their behaviour.

The Governing Body has endorsed the work that staff have been doing with students regarding combating bullying.

Through assemblies and tutor time activities we encourage students to:

- talk openly about bullying
- recognise its many forms
- realise its consequences
- always report bullying incidents
- discuss ways of tackling bullies

Above all, we try to break down the “don’t grass” attitude which has always been a feature of teenage years. Students and parents/carers can be assured that giving information about bullying will not make matters worse. We are very experienced at ensuring that the “victim” is protected.

We particularly ask parents/carers to listen sympathetically to worries about bullying. Many adults remember how deeply miserable they were made to feel at school - and the rebuffs they got from their parents/carers if they dared to raise the worry. **We will listen.**

Verbal bullying must be reported. Words really can hurt terribly. Traditional views about bullying have underplayed its verbal aspects, preferring to think of it mainly as physical violence. Our message is simple:

“Whatever the form of bullying, please tell, tell, tell!”

Anti-Bullying Procedures and Responsibilities

All staff have a duty and responsibility to stop and report any incident of bullying they encounter, however minor, to the relevant Year group office.

All students are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying by speaking in confidence to a Head of Year, Tutor, Student Attendance and Welfare Officer, or a member of the Leadership Group. Once reported, appropriate action will then be taken, which will at all times place the welfare and safety of the ‘victim’ at the forefront of the school’s response.

Heads of Year will coordinate all bullying investigations in conjunction, where necessary, with an appropriate member of the Leadership Group, usually the Director of Year.

Parent(s)/carer(s) of the bully and victim(s) will be involved as appropriate and will always be informed.

Sanctions

‘Restorative justice’* approaches to resolving bullying incidents will be employed wherever possible and appropriate.

Where appropriate, sanctions such as internal exclusion and fixed-term exclusions will be used.

In extreme cases the school reserves the right to permanently exclude students involved in serious cases of bullying.

The lead teacher “Behaviour” will monitor incidents of bullying and advise the Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher of trends and actions. These will be reported to the Headteacher.

Anti-Bullying Charter

Vandyke has developed its own anti-bullying charter and all parents/carers, staff and students are expected to sign the Charter in the Student Diary to demonstrate their commitment to the School’s anti-bullying stance (see Appendix 1).

**Restorative Justice is a recognised approach whereby the individuals involved in the incident are brought together in a controlled environment where a third party mediates to achieve a resolution. It is designed to help the protagonist begin to empathise with the victim of the bullying.*

Feeling Safe Standing Strong

This course is a six-session course offered to students who lack self confidence, self-esteem and assertiveness. The course is designed to develop the social and personal skills necessary for students to feel safe in school and to develop strategies for dealing with conflict and bullying. Students are identified by Year staff or the Achievement & Inclusion (A&I) Department. Parent(s)/carer(s) are always consulted before a student is recommended for this course.

Managing My Emotions

This course is a six-session course offered to students who have difficulties in managing their anger, or who engage in persistent bullying of other students. The course is designed to develop the emotional intelligence and the social and personal skills necessary for students to avoid conflict and bullying behaviour.

Parent(s)/carer(s) of students will always be consulted before a student is recommended for this course.

Staff Training

All new staff, including support staff, receive training and induction on anti-bullying. All are made aware of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and procedures. Staff are regularly updated on anti-bullying work and whole staff training takes place annually.

Student Attendance and Welfare Officers

Student Attendance and Welfare Officers are attached to each Year and play a key role in investigating, monitoring and recording bullying incidents. They work closely with Heads of Year and are responsible to Heads of Year.

Anti-Bullying in the Curriculum

The Life Skills' programme includes specific courses on anti-bullying, conflict resolution and personal development. These are reviewed regularly by the Life Skills' team. Assemblies and Tutor Time provide a further opportunity for students to engage in anti-bullying activity. Many subjects, including English, Humanities and Drama, explore issues related to bullying.

Publicising Vandyke's Anti-Bullying Policy and Work

This is achieved through a variety of publications and activities including:

- Student Diary
- Policy sent to all Parent(s)/Carer(s)
- Staff Handbook
- Staff Training
- Assemblies
- Life Skills programme
- School Prospectus
- School Website
- Parent/carers/student information leaflet

Advice for Parent(s)/Carer(s)

1. Be vigilant. Look for signs of distress (e.g. sleeplessness, becoming withdrawn, not wanting to come to school, etc.).
2. If you think your son/daughter is being bullied, remain calm and contact the school.
3. Encourage your son/daughter to talk to their tutor or another trusted adult in school.
4. Talk to your son/daughter and reassure them. 'Talk them up'. Build their self confidence.
5. Do not advise him/her to reply in kind.
6. Avoid becoming over-emotional. Your son/daughter needs you to be composed, strong and reassuring.
7. Work closely with the school to resolve any bullying issues.

Review of Policy and Procedures

Every three years through the Governors' Learning and Achievement Committee.