

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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## **Statement**

Aldworth School will not tolerate bullying. We aim to create a community which is caring and inclusive. Every student has the right to be, and feel, safe at school and there is no place within the school for bullying

## **Definition**

Bullying is the deliberate, persistent and repeated targeting of an individual, or group of individuals, with the aim of making them uncomfortable and unhappy. Bullying can be physical, emotional or social or cyber. Cyber-bullying between students within the school, even if out of school hours, will be addressed by the school where possible. The procedure aims to ensure students are aware when their behaviours are upsetting someone else and it is rare for something to be deemed bullying until this has been clearly pointed out to a student; equally, where a student has been told that certain behaviours are causing distress to another and they continue, the school will not be shy in labelling it as bullying.

## **Approach**

The school recognizes that sometimes students' fall out with each other and friendship issues can result in negative behaviours which fall short of bullying. Conflicts within friendship groups are common at this age and will be managed in a different way, it is important that students and parents do not label such disputes as bullying as a form of dramatising the situation. Mediation is the best method of resolving such issues rather than labeling students a' bully' and 'victim' the first stage of the process works on the basis that most issues where a student is feeling bullied, or is experiencing bullying behaviour from another child can be stopped by highlighting that. Having to follow through the later stages of the procedure is rare, but the process will be followed up to and including the final stage which involves removing the bully from the school.

## **Education**

Students are taught the distinct differences between rude behaviour (unintentionally hurtful), mean behaviour (intentionally hurtful) and bullying, whereby the perpetrator has been educated and knowingly repeats this.

Online abuse should be reported using the harmful content button on the school website alerting the social media platform; the perpetrator should be blocked across all platforms and the abuse reported to a trusted adult. Students are educated on reporting rather than retaliating.

Banter should not be used to downplay bullying, banter is when both parties are in on the joke and it is not discriminative or crossing the line.

Anti-bullying ambassadors are students who have been trained by the Diana Award and are available to provide a listening ear and support to their peers, should they experience any unkindness and wish to talk to someone of a similar age.

## **STAGES OF ANTI-BULLYING PROCEDURE**

### **STAGE ONE: Investigation and verbal warning**

The potential bully is confronted with their actions and invited to give their version of events. The investigating staff member will then decide whether this is a misunderstanding, a friendship issue or bullying behaviour. If it is deemed bullying, the student is clearly told that their behaviour is causing distress to others and unless it stops, they will be formally recorded as a bully and consequences will be put in place. The student will be clearly informed about the kind of behaviours they have exhibited that have caused distress and who they have been seen to be targeting. Where appropriate a reconciliation meeting with the victim may be arranged, with the victim's agreement. Where the situation is deemed as not bullying then the pastoral team will deal with the incident in the usual manner.

### **STAGE TWO: Head of Year interview and written statement**

Where stage one has not had the desired impact, the student is escalated to stage 2. The students write a formal statement, and any relevant investigation takes place. If bullying is confirmed, an anti-bullying contract is issued and signed by the student and the students' parents. The consequences of any further bullying are made clear.

### **STAGE THREE: SLT interview and written statement**

If the same student is reported again for targeting the same, or another student, then they will be called to a formal interview with a member of SLT. Having given their side, the SLT member will decide whether it is a continuation of bullying behaviour or not. If it is deemed bullying parents will be called in for a meeting and informed that this has been formally recorded as an incident in the bullying log. A written warning will be issued to the child and a copy given to the parents. There may be the opportunity of a reconciliation meeting between the victim and perpetrator where both parties feel it may help.

### **STAGE FOUR: Parental meeting and anti-harassment order**

The student will be served with an Anti-harassment Order (AHO) which will detail unacceptable behaviours, students they are not to have contact with and possibly restrict areas in the school where they are allowed to be. The school will look to move the victim and the perpetrator out of the same lessons where practicable, with the perpetrator being the one most likely to be moved – in set classes they are likely to be moved down a set. The incident will be recorded in the bullying log. There will be a parental meeting with the Headteacher for the perpetrator's parents where the anti-harassment order will be explained.

### **STAGE FIVE: External support and/or removal**

Should a student continue to bully other students there will be a case meeting with SLT members and support workers to decide on the next step. This is likely to involve examining how to remove the bully for any situation where they can continue to target the victim. Alternative education providers, be that the PRU or internal behaviour unit will be explored and explained. A managed move may also be considered or even permanent exclusion. By this stage the bully has persistently failed to change their behaviour and is a threat to students in the school.