



## Cothill House Policy Documents

### ISSR 10 Bullying

*NMS for Boarding: 12.1*

Date: September 2018  
Next review: summer 2019

All adults at Cothill have a responsibility to help create a secure, safe and happy environment for the boys in their care. Bullying must be dealt with promptly and firmly whenever it is met. The school takes the health and safety of all its Staff and boys seriously and this document is concerned with assessing and managing the risks to boys from bullying.

The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 make it clear that independent schools must ensure that bullying at the school is prevented in so far as reasonably practicable.

The school acknowledges the advice given in *Preventing & Tackling Bullying* (July 2017), & *Health and Safety Advice on Legal Duties and Powers* (Feb 2014)

**Two notices, one on Bullying & one on 'Our Golden Rules' are on display in every form room. Copies are included at the end of this policy.**

#### ***What is Bullying?***

- Bullying is when a boy's life is made unhappy - or worse - by the actions or words of another person or a group of persons. Bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals.
- Bullying hurts. Bullying is behaviour, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts someone else, either physically or emotionally. It includes name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone.
- Bullying is any form of unacceptable treatment or discrimination or behaviour intended to hurt or harm the reputation of another. It is sometimes described as 'abuse of power' but it is in fact a desire in the bully to control or harm another person. The reasons for this desire can be complex.
- Bullying can happen anywhere: at school, at home or online. It is usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally.

***Note that abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as banter, just having a laugh or part of growing up.***

Bullying may include any or all of the following:

1. Physical assaults (to persons or property).
2. Verbal Abuse (name calling, taunting, threats, etc).
3. Exclusion from peer groups.
4. Extortion
5. Aggressive or insulting gestures.
6. Online abuse: cyberbullying

The above can include: outright physical attacks, theft, vandalism, teasing, swearing, nasty nicknames, personal insults, racial and sexual taunts, malicious gossip. It is often motivated by prejudice against another boy's race, culture, SEN or disability.

Cyberbullying is an increasingly common form of bullying behaviour which happens on social networks, games and mobile phones. Cyberbullying can include spreading rumours about someone, or posting nasty or embarrassing messages, images or videos.

Bullying can take place regularly or occasionally. It can sometimes occur sporadically over a period of some years. It is always damaging and can be a corrupting influence on other children who witness it happening.

Bullying is serious and Staff are encouraged to follow the procedures laid out in this policy.

### **Prevention**

Prevention is better than cure, and all school staff proactively gather intelligence about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict and develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place. This includes talking to pupils about issues of difference and creating an ethos of good behaviour throughout the school, where pupils treat one another and the staff with respect because they know that this is the right way to behave.

PSHE lessons and sessions will provide opportunities to discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related difference. Pupils are encouraged to talk to Form Tutors, Houseparents, the Pastoral Deputy (Richard Sutton - RAS), DSLs (RAS & Maria Bailey - MB), Chaplain, matrons or any other member of staff if they feel bullied in any way.

At the daily staff meetings, there is an opportunity to raise any concerns about individual pupils and these concerns will always be followed up by Form Tutors, Houseparents, the Pastoral Deputy, etc. Disciplinary sanctions will be implemented as necessary.

### **The Bully**

There are many reasons why some children bully other children. A bully may be struggling with personal problems at home. The bullying behaviour may be the only way they know how to deal with a difficult situation in their personal life, such as parents divorcing, a death of a relative, abuse or humiliation of some sort in their life. *This does not mean that bullying behaviour is OK.*

All forms of anti-social behaviour is unacceptable. Bullies pick on others to make life better for themselves.

Sometimes, a bully will pick on someone because they are jealous or because they think that they will be seen as 'bigger and tougher' and it boosts their ego. For the bully, behaving in a bullying manner might be seen as a way to win friends.

Bullies can have a low self-esteem, despite looking confident. They will generally seek to have their own way and will respond to stressful situations impulsively. Boys sometimes think that 'real men' can only achieve what they want through physical violence or intimidation. Although it is impossible to generalise, bullies often:

1. Display aggression towards other boys and adults.
2. Have a tendency to break rules and engage in anti-social behaviour.
3. Have an inability to recognise faults in themselves.
4. Have an ability to communicate well and have an answer for everything.
5. Display some leadership qualities and wish to dominate others.

### ***The Bullied***

Boys can be passive or provocative victims.

The bullied are often:

1. New to the School.
2. Different in appearance, speech or behaviour.
3. Suffering from low self-esteem.
4. Amusing to others in their reactions when bullied (loss of control, etc)
5. Nervous, anxious or timid.

### ***Evidence of Bullying***

The following are not evidence of bullying, but may suggest it if several occur together or else are recurring:

1. Repeated minor injuries.
2. Deterioration in schoolwork or significant changes in behaviour which have no apparent explanation.
3. Tantrums.
4. An air of detachment.
5. Wariness.
6. A reluctance to return to school after a break.
7. An increasing lack of self confidence; a withdrawal from voluntary activities or few friends.
8. An unhealthy attachment to members of Staff.
9. Frequent complaints of being unwell.
10. Eating problems.

It is worth noting that adults can be bullies too: humiliation of a boy by using sarcasm, harassment or the over-use of the raised voice is a serious misuse of the power one holds over a boy. Such behaviour condones bullying by the boys themselves.

### ***Factors in the rise of Bullying***

1. Lack of parental guidance, warmth and love.
2. Lack of adult supervision.
3. Harsh physical or emotional treatment by adults.
4. A poorly run discipline system (rules, rewards and punishments).
5. Lack of moral education.
6. The behaviour of other boys.

Bullies thrive when:

1. There is an inadequate Staff presence.
2. There is a change of Staff (and hence a change in habits and relationships).
3. Boredom is prevalent in free time.
4. There is overcrowding and no haven.
5. The gulf between Staff and boys is too great for the sharing of problems.
6. There is a lack of trust.

## ***Bullying: the Policy***

The Staff must wholeheartedly support this policy.

While bullying is not common, it does occur and must be controlled.

**All Staff have access to the Pastoral Report Form on the School Intranet. This can alert the Headmaster, Pastoral Head and DSLs to issues as they arise, and these personnel will provide feedback and advice to Staff as necessary. These forms are archived and remain on file for so long as necessary.**

### *Prevention*

- An ordered and disciplined environment is essential, opportunities for bullying will then not occur.
- Particular attention must be paid to the times when boys are together in unsupervised groups: before a lesson, in a queue, changing for games, etc.
- Staff will receive training to help ensure that this policy is understood and implemented. Staff are encouraged, when on duty, to patrol effectively.
- Elements of PSHE teaching will help Staff and boys talk about - and deal with - incidents of bullying. Form teachers play a crucial role here. *See the policy on Listening.*
- Teaching in Assemblies (Prayers) by the Headmaster or Chaplain.

*The school is currently seeking to employ a new Chaplain in 2018.*

- Boys should be encouraged to recognise that bullying is unacceptable. 'Telling tales' may be one thing, but boys should feel able to speak out to members of Staff should they so desire.
- A sheet entitled *What is Bullying?* is on display in every form room.
- Drawing attention to any undesirable developments among the boys at Staff meetings.
- The recording of all serious incidents.

### • **Cyberbullying** includes:

- sending threatening or abusive text messages
- creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos
- 'trolling' - the sending of menacing/upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
- excluding children from online games, activities or friendship groups
- setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child
- encouraging people to self-harm
- creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass or cause trouble
- sending explicit messages, also known as sexting
- pressuring others into sending sexual images or engaging in sexual conversations.

### *Prevention*

Before pupils can use school computers, they must complete an online 'ICT Acceptable Use' document provided by the Head of ICT.

Pupils have no access to social media, nor email accounts other than that provided for them by the school; this helps prevent cyberbullying taking place within the school. A record is kept of all boys' browsing history.

Any instance of cyberbullying will be dealt with immediately, with the Headmaster being alerted and offending material forwarded to him. Pupils are not permitted handheld electronic items in school and the WiFi password for Cothill is not made available.

Where there are incidences of cyberbullying (including Sexting) taking place outside the school (by children using devices at home), the school will co-operate with parents and other agencies as necessary.

*See the separate E-Safety Policy*

### **Response**

A senior member of Staff, the Pastoral Deputy (RAS), form teacher or Head Matron can be consulted first, and opportunities to discuss matters in private and in confidence should be organised.

Teachers must try to ascertain the facts, investigate thoroughly and observe rather than rely upon hearsay.

1. Take every incident seriously and make sure allegations are substantiated before taking action; a risk assessment of the situation should be made.
2. Fill out a Bullying Report Form (and possibly a Pastoral Report Form) on the School Intranet.
3. Refer the matter to DMB, Pastoral Deputy, Housemaster, form teacher or Head Matron, as appropriate.
4. Speak sensitively to both bully and bullied.  
Remember, we all have rights and we all have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
5. Attempt to ensure some measure of protection for the bullied. Risk-based decision-making (with the benefit of the advice of statutory authorities, where appropriate) should be carried out with a view to ensuring the safety of *all* pupils.
6. The bullied may require advice on how to avoid similar incidents in the future. (See Fig. 1).
7. The bully must feel the disapproval of the school and understand that his acts must stop.
8. Explanation must accompany any punishment. Confront the bully with his deeds and ask why he felt he had to behave in the way he did.
9. Employ the sanctions outlined on the Disciplinary Scale (in the *Discipline, Behaviour, Rewards, Punishment & Exclusions Policy*). The Headmaster will decide whether any of the more serious sanctions (e.g. exclusion) are required.
10. When there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm', a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern. Where this is the case, staff should talk with the DSL and report concerns to the local authority.
11. External professional support and advice will be sought as necessary. This will be coordinated by the Headmaster, Pastoral Deputy / DSLs, in consultation with a pupil's parents.
12. A written record must be made of any serious incident. This book is kept in the Study.

Parents are made aware that bullying will not be tolerated and will be dealt with promptly and effectively. The parents of a bully / the bullied will be made aware by the Headmaster of serious incidents and involved in any deliberations which may follow. *See the Policies on Behaviour and Child Protection.*

### **The Disciplinary Scale**

See the *Discipline, Behaviour, Rewards, Punishment & Exclusions Policy* for the graduated list of sanctions.

### **Conclusion**

We should always be on the lookout for bullying and should respond to it at once.

We must always stress that it is not wrong to tell an adult about incidents of bullying. Moreover, once an incident has been reported, both the bully and the bullied must be dealt with immediately.

*A bullying incident can be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.*

Further help and information can be found online, including at:

Childline	<a href="https://www.childline.org.uk">https://www.childline.org.uk</a>	0800 1111
The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA)	<a href="http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk">http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk</a>	
The NSPCC	<a href="https://www.nspcc.org.uk">https://www.nspcc.org.uk</a>	0808 800 5000
Kidscape	<a href="https://www.kidscape.org.uk">https://www.kidscape.org.uk</a>	020 7730 3300

Fig . 1

## **Trying to understand your own feelings can help you to ...**

share what is happening with others  
judge when it is best to leave a situation  
recognise how others are feeling  
look confident even when you are afraid  
see you don't have to be liked by everyone  
tell others how you feel without being afraid  
stop going along with things you really don't want to do  
judge when and how to stand up for yourself and others

**... and get on with others**

# BULLYING



*words or actions used to hurt someone*

**Bullying** includes pushing, hitting, kicking & punching

**Bullies** tease by saying hurtful things

**Bullies** leave people out of their games

**Bullies** like having power over people

**Bullies** scare by shouting or threatening

**Bullies** can act alone but often have a group of friends

DO YOU KNOW  
SOMEONE  
WHO IS BEING  
**BULLIED?**

DON'T KEEP IT  
TO YOURSELF

**TELL**  
AN ADULT  
**NOW**

YOU KNOW  
BULLYING  
IS WRONG

~ What do I do if I am being bullied? ~

**Tell an adult.** You know bullying is wrong, so telling an adult is not sneaking. The adult will take you seriously and will help you.

# Our Golden Rules



We are **kind and helpful**. We **don't hurt** other people's feelings.

We **care** about **other people** and **listen** to what they have to say.

We are **honest** and don't cover up the **truth**.

We **work hard** and try not to waste time.

We **look after** our own things and **respect** other people's property.

We **don't waste** or **damage** things.