



King Edward's School – Preventing and tackling bullying

Reviewed September 2021 by the Deputy Head Pastoral

Section A – The policy

Statement of Intent

Bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Any member of the King Edward's School community, pupil, employee or volunteer, has the right to learn and work without fear of being bullied. Through this policy, King Edward's School aims to prevent bullying from occurring as far as is reasonably possible. Its objectives are to ensure that all members of the school community:

- prevent bullying by creating an orderly climate of respect within an inclusive community environment
- feel safe from bullying
- recognise bullying behaviour
- understand and support the School's stance against bullying
- know how to report incidents of bullying
- contribute to informing and, where possible, evaluating the policy

The School will give due regard to the DfE guidance document: [Preventing and tackling bullying](#)

This policy should be read in conjunction with the King Edward's School Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, the Visits / Trips out of School policy, the Behaviour and Discipline policy, the online safety Policy and Policy on dealing with online safety Incidents. These policies are available on the School website or by request.

Legal requirements

The law requires that the School must:

Ensure that, in so far that is reasonably practicable, bullying at the school is prevented by drawing up and implementing an effective anti-bullying strategy. In accordance with the non-statutory advice in Preventing and Tackling Bullying. (DfE, July 2017), King Edward's School will:

- Have regard to the Equality Act (2010) and seek to eliminate any unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between all members of the school community;
- Recognise that, under the Children Act 1989, bullying incidents should be addressed as a safeguarding concern when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

- Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2021, reinforces that peer on peer abuse can include bullying (including cyber-bullying), gender-based violence / sexual assaults and sexting (youth produced sexual imagery).
- Such incidents, where there is evidence of significant harm, would be referred to the appropriate LSCP, in accordance with the School's Safeguarding policy.
- While bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment, threatening behaviour and communications: for example, under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997; the Malicious Communications Act 1988; the Communications Act 2003, the Public Order Act 1986. If the Chief Master feels that an offence may have been committed, we will seek assistance from the Police.

What is bullying?

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (including online cyber-bullying), and can be motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, SEND or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is the School's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; teachers and schools have to make their own judgements about each specific case.

Bullying often can involve an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Bullying can have long term implications for the victim and has the potential to cause serious psychological damage. Bully incidents will 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.

We recognise that some instances of bullying will be determined as peer on peer abuse and as such, the School's Safeguarding policy and procedures will be used to ensure the appropriate action is taken for all involved.

This document aims to create a cohesive and consistent approach to prevent bullying in so far as it is reasonably possible. This includes the encouragement of reporting it, and suitable responses to deal with the problem. The policy applies to all pupils whether or not they are in the care of the School when the bullying behaviour occurs. See Appendix 1 for examples of bullying behaviour.

Cyberbullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

For specific advice on dealing with cyberbullying see the DfE guidance [Cyberbullying: advice for headteachers and school staff](#) and the King Edward's School eSafety policy, however the majority of

bullying incidents will inevitably involve elements of cyber bullying and will need careful handling. However, the generic advice and procedures in this policy will still apply.

Signs of bullying

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to attend 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 School nurse 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, nightmares
- Talking of harming themselves or running away

Preventative measures

The School's response to bullying does not start at the point at which a child has been bullied. Staff will proactively gather intelligence about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict and develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place. This might involve talking to pupils about issues of difference, perhaps in lessons, through dedicated events or projects, or through assemblies. Staff themselves will be able to determine what will work best for their pupils, depending on the particular issues they need to address. Specifically, we take the following preventative measures:

- We use assemblies when appropriate to explain the school's view on anti-social, hurtful behaviour. Our PSHE programme is also structured to give boys 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.
- Bullying is discussed as part of the PSHE programme in UMs (Year 9) and Fourths (Year 10) as part of a Relationships topic – including issues around toxic masculinity and peer pressure. During the Shell year (Year 7) the boys attend an internal anti-bullying workshop where considerable emphasis is placed on building relationships between the boys and teaching them how to deal with disagreement and potential conflict – both face-to-face and online. Bullying and relationships are explored extensively by the Drama Department in their schemes of work.
- All boys have an annual eSafety training – including a reminder about cyber bullying and associated issues (see eSafety policy for more details), The School's Acceptable Use Agreements make clear the School's expectations of safe and appropriate use of technology
- Other lessons, particularly RS, English and Drama 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. Bullying is discussed at School Councils
- The School openly discusses the differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender or sexuality. Also children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities. Schools can also teach children that using any prejudice based language is unacceptable. This also forms part of SMSC education and the teaching of British Values

- All boys are encouraged to tell a member of staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place. The term directory includes the “Code of Conduct” as well as “Advice for when you are worried” where specific reference is made to bullying and the people from whom help can be sought. Boys are also encouraged to speak out on behalf of anyone they know is being bullied. To quote from the Directory “To do nothing is to condone the action of the bully.”
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. A record is kept on CPOMS from which a bullying log can be extracted so any patterns can be established. We always monitor reported incidents.
- We have a strong and experienced pastoral team of Form Teachers, and Heads of Year / School who are supported by the Deputy Head Pastoral and are trained in handling any incidents as a priority, and are alert to possible signs of bullying.
- Bullying is discussed in meetings between staff to share information about friendship patterns, particular incidents and any known conflict between pupils so that strategies can be developed to prevent bullying.
- We take action to reduce the risk of bullying at times and in places where it is most likely: Staff are on duty at break and lunchtime 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.
- Form Room noticeboards, the Directory and noticeboards in the Study Centre display advice on where pupils can seek help, including details of confidential help lines and web sites connecting to external specialists, such as Childline, YoungMinds etc. There is also an anonymous reporting option on the Firefly dashboard – ‘Unhappy or worried’
- 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 boys from the School.
- We involve parents to ensure that they are clear that the School does not tolerate bullying and are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being bullied. Parents should feel confident that the school will take any complaint about bullying seriously and resolve the issue in a way that protects the child, and they reinforce the value of good behaviour at home
- We will implement disciplinary sanctions as appropriate. The consequences of bullying reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see that bullying is unacceptable
- We provide effective staff training. Anti-bullying policies are only effective when all School staff understand the principles and purpose of the school’s policy, its legal responsibilities regarding bullying, how to resolve problems, and where to seek support. Our pastoral system supports all staff in reporting and confronting stances of bullying. We provide effective training to all new staff on induction and to all staff regularly through CPD updates at INSET. Training in specialised skills to help staff understand the needs of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) pupils is available
- We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures.
- We regularly evaluate and update our approach to take account of developments in technology, as detailed in our online safety policy

Section B – Procedures - investigating a case of suspected bullying

Although a boy's Form Tutor is the first point of referral for all pastoral matters, all staff have an obligation to act immediately when bullying is suspected or reported. Having discovered the problem, a member of staff should:

- If present, reassure the victim that the issue will be investigated
- Immediately involve the victim's Form Tutor and/or appropriate Head of Year / School or member of the Senior Leadership Team

Interviews

The initial investigation should usually be carried out by the victim's Form Tutor or Head of Year / School.

If you have any reservations whatsoever about conducting a one-to-one interviews with any of the parties involved either consult a senior colleague for advice or arrange to have another teacher present throughout the interview.

In cases of suspected bullying, it is essential that the following are interviewed separately:

- The alleged victim
- Witnesses
- The suspected bully

This is a lengthy process to which time must be allocated. It is important that the pastoral care of all boys is paramount throughout the investigation.

Although each individual case will be different, a suggested outline procedure would be:

- Speak to the alleged victim, reassuring him of your intention to deal with the situation.
- Gather as much information as possible from witnesses.
- Interview the suspected bully. It is obviously better to do this when you have as much corroborated evidence as possible.
- Finally, met with the victim again. At this stage you will have a fairly clear picture of what has been happening. Check the victim is comfortable with the outcome of the investigation

Interviews need to be conducted in a calm, professional, dispassionate and non-confrontational manner.

Brief notes should be made following each interview and the boys being interviewed should write statements giving their account of events. These can then be collated as a summary of what has been said by all parties. Remember, that taking notes during an interview will make some boys feel nervous; read the situation and act accordingly.

Avoid reacting in anger, even though you may be outraged at what you hear.

In each case allow the boy to tell his story without accusing, threatening, issuing warnings or asking leading questions. It is important that:

- The victim feels he is receiving support.
- The witness feels comfortable and safe, knowing that any reprisal against him by the bully will be acted upon.
- The suspected bully feels that his side of the story is being fairly listened to.

If at any time the member of staff investigating feels that they need further support or guidance they should discuss with a senior colleague.

Assessment

Following interviews, staff will then consider the incident. The assessment will consider all aspects of the investigation – for example:

- The nature of the incident(s) – physical / verbal / exclusionary etc.
- Is it a "one-off" incident involving an individual or a group?
- Is it part of a pattern of behaviour by an individual or a group?
- Has physical injury been caused?
- Is this peer on peer abuse? Is there a safeguarding concern?
- If so, discuss with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Who should be informed? Chief Master? Parents? Police?

If the staff investigating believe that serious bullying behaviour has occurred, or has recurred after warnings have been given to the bully, then the Head of Year / School in discussion with a member of SLT will decide on the action to be taken in accordance with the School's Behaviour and Discipline Policy. Parents of the victim and bully will be notified, giving them details of the case and the action being taken. The Chief Master will be notified.

In serious cases, such action may include further investigation in accordance with the Exclusions, Removal and Review Policy.

Range of action

When a complaint of bullying behaviour is upheld, the range of responses may include one or more of the following. Disciplinary measures must be applied fairly, consistently, and reasonably taking account of any special educational needs or disabilities that the pupils may have and taking into account the needs of vulnerable pupils.

- Advice and support for the victim, who will be told that action is being taken to relieve the situation and where appropriate establishing a course of action to help the victim, including support from external services where appropriate.
- Advice and support to help the bully to understand how his actions are affecting the victim and to decide for himself to modify his behaviour. This may include clear instructions and a warning or final warning. Further counselling may be needed and parents will also be kept fully informed about this process.
- Consideration of the motivation behind the bullying behaviour and whether external services should be used to tackle any underlying issues of the bully which contributed to the bullying behaviour. If these considerations lead to any concerns that the bully may be at risk of harm, the School's safeguarding procedures will be followed
- A supervised meeting between the bully and the victim to discuss their differences and the ways in which they may be able to avoid future conflict
- A disciplinary sanction against the bully, in accordance with the School's Behaviour and Discipline Policy. Parents will often be asked to meet with a member of the SLT or Head of Year / School. In a very serious case or a case of persistent bullying, a pupil may be required to leave the School permanently in accordance with the School's Expulsion, Removal and Review Policy
- The Police may be consulted
- Such other action as may appear to the Chief Master to be appropriate.

Follow-up

The position will be monitored for as long as possible thereafter. Action may include:

- Sharing information with some or all colleagues so that they may be alert to the need to monitor certain pupils closely
- Ongoing counselling and support for both bully and victim
- Mentioning the incident at meetings of staff and liaison between Heads of Year/ School, as appropriate, with outcomes being recorded
- Reviewing vulnerable individuals and areas of the School
- Reviewing any serious incident to ensure lessons are learnt
- The following need to be included in the bullying log and the file of both bully and victim:
 - Information gleaned from interviews.
 - A statement of the action taken (and later follow-up).
 - Any correspondence with parents.

Further sources of information

Department for Education

[Preventing and tackling bullying](#)

[School support for children and young people who are bullied](#)

[Cyberbullying: advice for headteachers and school staff](#)

[Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying](#)

Bullying behaviour

Bullying behaviour includes:

- Name-calling
- Taunting
- Mocking
- Making offensive or humiliating comments
- Gossiping
- Spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours
- Laughing or sniggering at someone in an unkind way
- Taking or deliberately damaging a person's belongings
- Threats and extortion
- Physical violence and intimidation
- Using body language inappropriately e.g. giving "dirty" looks
- Deliberately invading someone's personal space
- Producing offensive graffiti or writing unkind notes about someone
- Cyber bullying i.e. inappropriate text messaging, emailing and use of social network sites e.g. Whatsapp, Snapchat, Youtube, Instagram, online gaming platforms etc.
- Sending or displaying offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet or email
- Isolating or excluding people either socially or online
- Racist; religious; cultural, sexual, sexist, homophobic, family economic status, academic ability, special educational needs disability- related language and comments or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities