



# Anti-Bullying Policy

## The Coleshill School Policy Statement:

At The Coleshill School, we believe that every member of our school community has the right to a secure, safe and well-disciplined environment.

The school takes a firm stand on behaviour and equal opportunities issues and this underpins our position that bullying behaviour of any kind cannot be tolerated. Within the school community of students, students, parents and teachers, we have a shared responsibility to ensure that all students can maximise their potential and get the best possible start to their lives from their time at school.

## The Coleshill School Charter

### **At The Coleshill School students will ...**

- Respect one another and think before we speak or act against another person.
- Tell someone in authority if we witness or experience bullying, any kind of intimidation or exploitation.
- We will use social media responsibly and report all incidents of cyber bullying

### **At The Coleshill School staff will ...**

- Take all accusations of bullying, intimidation or exploitation seriously and deal with it sensitively.
- Make the bullies and their parents / carers aware of what they are doing.
- Support the victim and the bully

**The Nature of Bullying:** There are many definitions of bullying, but most consider it to be:

- Deliberately hurtful actions [including aggression];
- Repeated often over a period of time;
- Difficult for victims to defend themselves against.

Bullying can take many forms, but three main types are:

- Physical – hitting, kicking, interfering or taking property;
- Verbal – name calling, insulting others, making offensive remarks;
- Indirect – spreading nasty stories about someone, exclusion from social groups, being made the subject of malicious rumours, sending malicious e-mails or text messages on mobile phones.



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Name-calling is the most common direct form, with the most common vehicle being various forms of social media (Cyber Bullying). This may be because of individual characteristics, but students can be called nasty names because of their ethnic origin, nationality or colour, sexual orientation, size, or some form of disability.

The above points make explicit the actions, which are deemed as bullying. However, this policy statement aims to make it clear that bullying is a systematic process, quite consciously designed to hurt or frighten another. Bullying is not a 'one-off' name calling, nor an altercation that occurs in the heat of the moment although clearly both these sorts of behaviour are undesirable. It is important that students are guided towards an understanding of what sets bullying apart from other types of undesirable or unpleasant behaviour.

It is vital that students or parents of students who feel they are being bullied, or know someone who is being bullied, should feel able to talk to somebody – for example a representative of the HOPE peer mentoring program [Helping Others & Promoting Empathy], A Teacher/Tutor, Head of House or senior member of staff. In order to achieve this at The Coleshill School, a climate of openness and active support for all members of the school community is promoted and encouraged.

Students must also know that their concerns will be listened to and acted upon. Every case of bullying must be taken seriously and investigated. There are three main strands to this; through the ethos in which bullying is rejected, through specific curriculum work and through dealing with students involved in bullying incidents. Most importantly, the school through its Behaviour Policy has a strong value system, which supports a positive work ethos and rewards and celebrates achievement. Anti-bullying work is specifically covered as an integral part of the curriculum, particularly through assemblies and the Vertical Tutoring programme, so that students are clear about what is expected of them.

We consider the involvement of families of bullies and victims as crucial to the success of any Anti-Bullying Policy. Parents and carers must be contacted as necessary and should feel free to contact the school to discuss any matters that relate to bullying, whether it is a general concern or one that relates to an individual or group.

All students have been informed and advised 'What to do if bullying occurs' whether it be in or out of school or via social media.



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## Advice Offered to Students:

### **If you are being bullied or witness someone being bullied:**

- Try to stay calm and look as confident as you can;
- Be firm and clear – look them in the eye and tell them to stop;
- Get away from the situation as quickly as possible;
- Tell an adult or HOPE mentor what has happened straight away.

### **After you have been bullied:**

- Tell a teacher or another adult in your school;
- Tell your family;
- If you are scared to tell an adult or senior student by yourself, ask a friend to come with you;
- Keep speaking up until someone listens and does something to stop the bullying;
- Use the support the school has to offer such as the HOPE program, Form Tutor, Year Leader and/or member of senior staff;
- Don't blame yourself for what has happened.

### **When you are talking to an adult or a HOPE Mentor about bullying, be clear about:**

- What has happened to you;
- How often it has happened;
- Who was involved;
- Who saw what was happening;
- Where & when it happened;
- What you have done about it already.

## The Importance of a Home-School Partnership:

Parents and carers need to be engaged as full partners in any anti-bullying strategy. They need to be kept aware of the school's philosophy and practice and need to know the part they must play in helping their children, whether they have been involved as a victim or bully.

Parents and carers are in ideal positions to observe changes in their child's behaviour, which may well indicate that they are being bullied. In any such situations parents should follow the following advice:-

## Advice Offered to Parents:

### **What to do if you feel your son/daughter is being bullied .....**

Calmly talk to your child and find out as much as you can.



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**If possible ..... make a note of what your child says and try to find out:**

- The name, year or tutor group or description of the bully or ring leader if there is a group;
- Where and when the bullying happens;
- What exactly happens [in as much detail as possible];
- How your child has responded so far [what they have said or done];
- Reassure your child that telling you about the bullying was the right thing to do;
- Explain that any further incidents should be reported to a teacher immediately.

**Then .....**

- Contact the school to speak to a member of staff, preferably your son or daughter's Tutor who will know your child best or if they are not available, his or her Head of Year;
- Ask the member of staff to get back in touch when they have managed to find out more;
- If the Tutor or Head of House is not available ask to speak to one of the Senior Leadership Links for the House that your son / daughter is in.



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## FROM POLICY TO PRACTICE

### Guidelines and Advice for Staff:

A lot of what follows may seem self-evident, but it is important that action taken against bullying is consistent across the staff, so it is important that there is a proper framework. It should be accepted that there are as many bullying situations as there are bullies. We shall always need to apply our professional judgment to make decisions, based on the individuals involved and on the nature of the bullying. However, the following guidelines are intended to provide a framework for action.

### Immediate Responses:

**1. Always take the report of bullying seriously.**

It is very important to react quickly but also objectively. If the situation becomes more emotionally charged, it could escalate and increase the bully's power. It is our policy to note down accounts of students involved in major incidents. This is also an appropriate strategy for bullying behaviour.

**2. Take action as quickly as possible.**

Consideration must be given to whether the action needs to be private or public. This is likely to depend on the students involved and the nature of the bullying. It is absolutely vital to investigate the incident properly. If the situation is dealt with simply through reassuring interviews for the victim and warnings for the bully, some crucial piece of evidence may be missed and, the incident may recur.

**3. Reassure the victim.**

Victims often need to be reassured that the bullying will not get worse as a result of it being reported. It is important that the victim is not made to feel badly about having come to see a member of staff. An important part of reassurance is to make sure that you don't keep reminding students about the event in an obvious way.

**4. Offer concrete help, advice and support to the victim.**

This will vary according to the situation, but reassurance is a key strategy. Coming to school with friends, avoiding areas where the victim might meet the bully, joining lunchtime activities or going to the library where there is staff supervision, staying close to where members of staff are on duty at break and lunch times but without "clinging to them" are all quick and easy strategies that can be offered.

**5. Speak to the bully.**

Make it plain to the bully that you disapprove of bullying behaviour and so does the school. Encourage the bully to see the victim's point of view. Refer to the school's anti-bullying policy, the emphasis of educational achievement, the climate of tolerance and the value and support for others.



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### 6. **Involve other staff.**

Tutors must communicate to the appropriate Head of House of incidents that have occurred. Alternatively classroom teachers and Teaching Assistants should inform pastoral staff such as Tutors or Heads of House where incidents have occurred in class. E-mail is the most useful medium for this. As a matter of course, **all** incidents of racist bullying should be recorded pm the central log and communicated to a senior member of staff. It is the Head of House's responsibility to ensure that the central log is completed via SSp meetings and that the SIMS database is up-to-date.

Colleagues may need to be informed if the incident arose out of a situation where staff need to be vigilant, for example at Break time or in less accessible areas of the school. Heads of House / Inclusion Managers should make arrangements as necessary to provide 'safe' areas for vulnerable students.

### 7. **Contact home.**

Once a concern about bullying has been established by a member of staff, it is usually a good idea to contact the home of both of the victim and the bully. Parents/Carers who find out subsequently about bullying incidents can often, understandably feel distressed or angry if they have not been informed. Heads of House often find the most appropriate contact with home to be by telephone, Therefore when letters dealing with serious issues are written, they should always be in consultation with the Head of Year who may already be aware of a problem and should follow a common format using the school template for letters.

### 8. **Punish the bully if necessary but with caution.**

This may need to be done if the bullying has continued despite giving advice and contacting home. However, aggressive or punitive action could give the impression that these ways of dealing with things are acceptable. If sanctions are given they must be explained clearly – what they are and why they are being given and consistency as always is the key to dealing with any inappropriate behaviour and therefore it is best practice to discuss punitive action with another colleague, particularly a Head of House.

**NB** All Year 7 students are supported with Group Mentoring sessions with progress leader and sixth form students during the first half of the Autumn Term to help them settle in.

### 9. **Consider assigning a 'Peer Mentor' to the pupil.**

Peer mentors are used to support students who report bullying. These students are supported by students from the HOPE program.

### **FINAL POINTERS**



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We must always try to be aware of changes in behaviour among students, whilst not over-reacting to situations. A victim might seem to be withdrawn, isolated, not working well, coming to school late, truanting individual lessons and so on. A bully might seem to have a larger than usual group around him or her, appearing to be talking behind someone's back, be heard shouting insults in a corridor or have undue power or control over a group or an individual. Share any concerns with other staff and the tutor in the first instance, so that they are aware there may be a problem.

It is important not to be over-protective to the victim, they must be encouraged and empowered to help themselves, certainly with some support from the teacher. But the teacher won't always be around ....

It should never be assumed that the bully is a thoroughly bad person. Bullying behaviour can be changed and the prospect of how to do this should be explored with the bully.

It is not necessary to keep the bullying incident a secret but obviously using one's professional judgement, there will be areas of limited confidentiality and certainly discretion, in terms of the passing on of information. However, undue secrecy could mean that staff might miss potential problems, or won't have sufficient information should the bullying recur.

Not all incidents of bullying, especially the minor or unsubstantiated need to be raised with parents/carers, but if they are written to, or asked to come to the school, the member of staff should have a constructive plan to offer to them. It is also advisable to have a Head of House on call, or present at the interview, in case any interview requires a wider perspective or more serious immediate action.

If parents are called to the school, it is vital that the facts of the case are clear. Calling their son/daughter a bully is something most parents take exception to, so it is crucial that an outline of what has happened can be given. It should be made clear whether a parent is being informed of concerns, so that a situation does not become worse, or whether there is a definite, clear-cut case of proven bullying. Inviting parents into school is normally done by Tutors, Head of House or the Inclusion Manager.



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## The School ABC Group [Anti-Bullying Committee]

The HOPE program seeks to involve the senior students of the school to provide a support network for students. The mentors play an active role in reducing bullying within the school community. Students are assigned to Houses and are introduced to students via Assemblies and the HOPE noticeboard which prominently displays their photographs. Students review incidents with staff regularly and record instances and responses via a common format to ensure a central log is maintained.

### **An Overview of Strategies for Reducing Bullying:**

The following is a list of key strategies used to prevent or reduce bullying. Some strategies may not remain appropriate if there has been violence or serious incidents and in such circumstances tougher measures will be needed in accordance with the School Behaviour Policy. The strategies are examples of those agreed by HOPE mentors, the pastoral staff and teaching staff

#### **Establish a climate of tolerance and respect:**

Through House and Year Assemblies, staff raise awareness of the support mechanisms in place and the key personnel to seek advice from. A variety of Assembly topics are selected to address issues surrounding individual and group behaviour and associated responsibility and consequences. 'Citizenship' is an integrated part of the SEAL programme in all key stages.

#### **Co-operative Group Work:**

Through the Vertical Tutoring Programme, students work together on shared tasks, raising the awareness of co-operation, individual accountability and rights and responsibilities.

#### **Circles of Friends:**

Sometimes known as circles of support, they build relationships around a vulnerable pupil to improve the level of acceptance and inclusion of a pupil, help a pupil make friends inside or outside the circle and increase insight into the pupil's feelings and behaviour.

#### **Befriending:**

This involves assigning selected pupil volunteers to 'be with' or 'befriend' peers who have been referred as needing help and support.

#### **Mediation by Peers:**

In a structured way, a neutral person helps voluntary participants resolve their disputes, defusing tension between peers. Trained peer mentors work help resolve student issues at the instruction of Year leaders.

#### **Assertiveness Training Groups:**





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The Guided Learning Centre staff work with small groups of vulnerable students to boost self-esteem and provide strategies for students to cope in social situations that they find difficult.

### **'One to One' Support Mentoring:**

Individual mentoring sessions can be arranged by appointment or self-referral to either the pupil's Year leader or HOPE program co-ordinator (Mr Chetwynd).

### **Direct Staff Intervention:**

When incidents are serious or where students do not respond to preventative strategies to combat bullying, the school will take tougher action to deal with serious bullying. As part of the School Behaviour Policy there are a range of sanctions to deal with this kind of bullying and this may include:

- Removal from the group/class;
- Withdrawal of break and lunch time privileges;
- Detention;
- Withholding participation in any school trips or sports events that are not an essential part of the curriculum;
- Interviews with parents, students and a school representative;
- Fixed period exclusion and / or permanent exclusion.

### **Monitoring of Bullying Incidents and Pre-Active Planning**

The school will monitor the issue of bullying, recording and logging incidents via a 'central log' and SIMS as appropriate and routinely appraising the success of the policy as a matter of course within the established process of review. HOPE mentors will record and log incidents using the appropriate form. Pastoral staff will continue with their established practice of keeping a log of daily events, actions and outcomes. As a matter of course, **all** incidents of racist bullying should be recorded and communicated to a senior member of staff linked with the appropriate House.

The school will also make the Governing Body aware of bullying issues within all Key Stages by reporting on a regular basis at Managing the Organisation meetings.

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