



Anti-Bullying

POLICY DOCUMENT

QUEEN'S COLLEGE, LONDON POLICY AGAINST BULLYING and staff procedures for dealing with any incidents reported

'We measure our success by the development of each individual. We value personal integrity and the discernment to deal responsibly with the wider world.'

AIMS OF THE POLICY

This policy is designed to be clear, practicable and sensible; hence, it is not exclusive, cannot cater for every eventuality and does not lay down rigid rules. It enshrines a central tenet of the philosophy of Queen's College: that the spiritual and moral welfare of the pupil is crucial for the development of happy, confident and courteous individuals who integrate successfully with their peers and contribute thoughtfully to life in the community. In order to achieve this, the college aims to prevent bullying and to deal effectively with bullying if it does occur. We shall do this by:

- maintaining an environment characterised by warmth, positive regard and mutual respect, so that bullying will be less likely;
- raising awareness of bullying through the curriculum and other activities;
- having clear procedures and action plans to deal with instances of bullying;
- developing effective strategies for recognising and supporting victims of bullying, including victims of homophobic bullying, cyberbullying and bullying related to race, religion, sex and culture, and for recognising and dealing with bullies;
- ensuring that all staff know what to do if they come across bullying, that they treat incidents seriously and that they are consistent in their approach;
- assuring parents and girls that all reports of bullying will be treated seriously.

DEFINITION:

What is bullying?

The term bullying refers to a range of harmful behaviour, both physical and psychological. All bullying behaviour usually has the following four features.

1. It is repetitive and persistent – though sometimes a single incident can have the precisely the same impact as persistent behaviour over time, for it can be experienced as part of a continuous pattern and can be extremely threatening and intimidating.
2. It is intentionally harmful – though occasionally the distress it causes is not consciously intended by all of those who are responsible.
3. It involves an imbalance of power, leaving someone feeling helpless to prevent it or put a stop to it.
4. It causes feelings of distress, fear, loneliness and lack of confidence in those who are at the receiving end.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures);
- Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence;
- Racist: racial taunts, graffiti, gestures;
- Faith-based: negative stereotyping, name-calling or ridiculing based on religion
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments; use of sexist language or negative stereotyping based on gender
- Homophobic: because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality;
- SEN / Disability: name-calling, innuendo, negative stereotyping or excluding from activity based on disability or learning difficulties
- Gifted/Talented: name-calling, innuendo, ostracism or negative peer pressure based on high levels of ability or effort
- Verbal/Psychological: name-calling, threats, taunts, shunning/ostracism, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing;
- Cyber: all areas of internet, such as email & internet chat room misuse; mobile threats by text messaging & calls; misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities.

Signs and Symptoms

A girl may indicate by signs or behaviour she is being bullied. Staff should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a girl:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the school / public bus or begs to be driven to school
- changes her usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic) or begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries herself to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged or has possessions which are damaged or 'go missing'
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully) or has other monies continually 'lost'
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (money / lunch has been stolen) or stops eating
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous & jumpy when a cyber message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated. [© *Kidscape*]

Pupils must be encouraged to report bullying in schools. Staff must be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with the college policy. All staff, in particular those with pastoral responsibilities, are encourage to read/refer to 'Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools', published by the DFE. A copy of this can also be found in the staff room, as well as on teachernet on the DFE publications website.

ACTION:

Pupils who are bullying others also need support to help them understand and change their behaviour. Pupils who are aware of bullying ('bystanders') can be a powerful force in helping to address any bullying and should be encouraged to do so in a safe way.

If a member of staff suspects or has evidence of bullying, or if he/she is informed of suspected/actual bullying by a victim, another girl, a parent or member of staff, he/she will act quickly and effectively. He/she will:

- listen carefully to, and record, the allegations, and immediately pass the information on to the appropriate Head of Section;
- reassure the victim/informant that they have done the right thing
- explain that you will need to share the information with a member of the pastoral team and that the matter will be handled sensitively;

A member of the pastoral team, most likely a Head of Section or Year tutor, will then:

- draw up an agreed action plan with relevant members of staff and parents concerned. This may result in:
 - further investigation of the allegations;
 - speaking to parents of all the girls involved, ideally before any investigation begins;
- record all information gathered in an individual girl's file.
- All instances of bullying must also be logged in the central bullying record, kept in the admissions office so that any patterns in bullying may be more clearly identified

OUTCOMES:

The outcomes will be dependent on the nature and seriousness of the particular circumstances. They may include:

- the bully apologising to the victim;
- sanctions (see below);
- meetings with parents;
- further support for both the bully and the victim, to develop emotional and social skills, to establish expectations and to praise/reward;
- regular monitoring by the Year Tutor and Head of Section (eg half-termly reviews for two terms);
- more informal monitoring and review over the longer term.

Sanctions may include:

- forfeiture of outings and privileges;
- supervised detention during break and lunch outside the Principal's office;
- detention with the Senior Tutor after school;
- suspension;
- permanent exclusion (although more usually parents will agree to withdraw their daughter).

All meetings will be accurately recorded and filed centrally. Parents and the Principal will be kept fully informed.

PREVENTION:

Staff, girls and parents need to be aware that the College disapproves of bullying and that it will not be tolerated. To prevent bullying occurring, the College will:

- involve all members of the community;
- ensure that the College's anti-bullying policy is widely published;
- raise awareness of bullying through publicly displayed anti-bullying material (class rooms, nurse's notice-board, homework diaries);
- develop awareness of bullying, promote good relationships and develop emotional skills through the PSHEE curriculum;
- promote good relationships and develop emotional skills through classroom activities, team-building activities, form assemblies, subject-based activities and learning (e.g. Art, Drama, English, RS);
- develop girls' awareness and understanding, and provide peer support, through the prefect system and mentoring schemes;
- develop staff awareness and understanding through INSET;
- ensure that all new staff and NQTs are aware of the College's policy and are given appropriate support and training;
- encourage staff to regularly engage with girls and monitor behaviour during lunch and break, particularly when they are on patrolling/lunch duty;
- communicate fully and regularly with parents;
- develop parents' awareness and understanding, through parent workshops;
- regularly canvass girls' views through the School Parliament.

This policy is reviewed each year by the Council of Queen's College at its AGM.