Kimbolton School
Cambridgeshire

ANTI-BULLYING AND ANTI-CYBERBULLYING POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

Kimbolton School is committed to providing a safe, nurturing and supportive environment where all pupils can flourish academically, socially and emotionally. Bullying of any form, including cyberbullying, is not tolerated. This Anti-Bullying and Anti-Cyberbullying Policy outlines the school's commitment to preventing bullying, responding effectively to incidents, and supporting all members of the school community in creating a respectful and positive environment.

This policy applies to all pupils, staff and volunteers at the school, both during school hours and outside of school hours.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING

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. It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.[1]

Bullying behaviour can take various forms, including:

1. Physical Bullying: Hitting, pushing, or other forms of physical aggression.
2. Verbal Bullying: Name-calling, insults, or making hurtful comments.
3. Social Bullying: Exclusion, spreading rumours or damaging someone's reputation.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying refers to bullying that occurs through digital platforms, including social media, text messages, emails, and online gaming platforms. It can include sending hurtful or threatening messages, posting harmful or malicious content online, sharing private information without consent, excluding individuals from online groups or forums or impersonating someone online with the intent to cause harm.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This policy aims to:

- Promote a culture of kindness, respect and understanding within the school community.
- Provide clear guidelines on the prevention, identification and response to bullying and cyberbullying, i.e., to outline the School's Antibullying Strategy.
- Ensure all pupils, staff and parents understand their roles in maintaining a bullying-free environment.
- Foster an environment where pupils feel safe and supported in reporting bullying incidents.
- Ensure that all incidents of bullying and cyberbullying are taken seriously, investigated promptly and dealt with effectively.
- Support those who have been bullied with appropriate measures.

[1] Department for Education (DfE) Guidance on Preventing and Tackling Bullying (2017), p. 8.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Staff Responsibilities:

- All staff members, including teaching and support staff, have a responsibility to promote a safe environment and challenge inappropriate behaviour. Staff will:
- Be proactive in promoting positive behaviours and relationships.
- Observe pupils' behaviour in the classroom, during breaks and in other areas of the school.
- Challenge bullying behaviour when they witness it.
- Report incidents of bullying or alleged bullying to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Maintain confidentiality and handle bullying reports sensitively.

Pupil Responsibilities:

Pupils are expected to:

- Treat others with respect and kindness.
- Be aware of the effects of bullying on others.
- Report any incidents of bullying to a trusted adult, a teacher or a peer mentor.
- Support their peers and help to create an inclusive and supportive environment.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities:

Parents and guardians play a vital role in ensuring their children are aware of the importance of good behaviour and the negative impact of bullying. They should:

- Encourage their children to speak out if they experience or witness bullying.
- Support the school in addressing bullying incidents and trust the school's processes for managing such issues.
- Stay informed about their child's online activities and educate their child about the dangers and impacts of cyberbullying.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

Kimbolton School employs a range of preventative strategies to combat bullying, both in-person and online:

School Culture:

The school fosters a positive culture where mutual respect, empathy and kindness are emphasised through assemblies, PSHE (Personal, Social, and Health Education) lessons, and pupil-led initiatives.

Anti-Bullying Week:

The school participates in National Anti-Bullying Week to raise awareness and encourage positive behaviour.

Online Safety Education:

Pupils are taught about the importance of online safety, responsible social media use, and the impact of cyberbullying as part of their PSHE curriculum.

Inclusive Environment:

The school promotes inclusivity through cultural awareness days, pupil clubs and activities that celebrate diversity and encourage friendships.

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING BULLYING

Pupils, parents and staff members should report any concerns or incidents of bullying immediately. There are several ways this can be done:

Verbal Report:

Any pupil can report bullying to a teacher, tutor, or any member of staff they feel comfortable speaking to. All staff are trained in how to respond to reports of bullying.

Online Reporting System:

The school provides an online system for anonymous reporting, where pupils can submit concerns confidentially.

Pupil Support:

Pupils who are victims of bullying can speak to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), a trusted teacher, or a school counsellor for help.

Parent Communication:

Parents are encouraged to contact the school via email, phone or in person to report bullying concerns. The school's response will be prompt and supportive.

RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS OF BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING

Once a bullying incident has been reported, the following actions will be taken:

Initial Investigation:

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or relevant pastoral staff will conduct an initial investigation to gather facts from all involved parties. This may include speaking with the victim, the alleged perpetrator and any witnesses. The DSL will keep records of all bullying allegations and actions taken in response.

Support for the Victim:

The victim will be offered immediate support, which may include counselling, increased monitoring or check-ins by staff. If the DSL feels that there is risk of harm, a risk assessment and/or safety plan will be written, ensuring that appropriate measures are in place to prevent further harm.

Intervention with the Perpetrator:

The alleged perpetrator(s) will be addressed, and – if the school feels, on the balance of probabilities – that they have acted inappropriately, then actions will be initiated in line with the school's Behaviour Policy. This may involve restorative justice practices, individual support or disciplinary sanctions, depending on the nature and severity of the incident.

Parental Involvement:

Parents of both the victim and the perpetrator will be informed and may be involved in meetings to discuss the situation and agreed actions.

Follow-Up:

The situation will be monitored to ensure that the bullying has stopped, and further action will be taken if necessary.

SANCTIONS AND DISCIPLINARY ACTION

The school's approach to bullying is one of education, support and restoration. However, where bullying behaviour is persistent or severe, sanctions may be applied, including but not limited to: Verbal or written warnings, Behaviour contracts, Temporary removal from certain school activities or privileges, Suspension from school (for serious or repeated incidents), Expulsion (in cases of extreme bullying that endangers the wellbeing of other pupils).

SUPPORT FOR PUPILS INVOLVED IN BULLYING

It is important that both victims and perpetrators of bullying receive the necessary support to understand the consequences of their actions and to learn how to make better choices. Support for pupils involved in bullying may include:

Counselling Services:

Both the victim and perpetrator may be offered individual or group counselling to explore their feelings and develop better social skills.

Restorative Justice:

Where appropriate, the school may use restorative practices, such as facilitated meetings between the victim and perpetrator, to repair harm and promote understanding.

Behavioural Support Plans:

For pupils who are identified as repeat offenders, a tailored behaviour support plan will be created in collaboration with parents and other relevant professionals.

VULNERABLE GROUPS

The Equality Act 2010 provides protection from discrimination, harassment, and victimisation on the grounds of protected characteristics such as race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, and gender reassignment. Bullying related to these characteristics is a form of harassment. Kimbolton School is committed to ensuring that no pupil faces discrimination or harassment. Bullying that is racist, misogynist, homophobic, or which targets any of the protected characteristics, will not be tolerated. Pupils who are found to be perpetrators will be warned and if they persist, will put their place in the school into jeopardy.

The school recognises that boarders who are being bullied cannot escape their bullies for long periods of time as they are not going home as often. We take the issue of bullying in boarding seriously and encourage boarders to report bullying to their Housemaster or any member of boarding staff. We also encourage them to use our anonymous online reporting tool to report bullying, if they feel unable to speak directly. Also, in line, with national standards for boarding, boarders are provided additional avenues for support with any concerns affecting their physical or emotional wellbeing, including provision of an independent person who sits outside the leadership and governance of the school whom they can contact at any time.

GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE AND RELATED SCHOOL POLICIES

Kimbolton School adheres to the content and requirements of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' September 2025 (KCSIE), 'Working Together To Safeguard Children' (2023) (WTTSC), The National Minimum Standards for boarding schools (where applicable) and the Prevent Duty (2023).

Anti-Bullying and Anti-Cyberbullying Policy

This policy has regard to DfE Guidance on Preventing and Tackling Bullying (2017), Behaviour in Schools: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff (DfE, 2024), Teaching Online Safety in School (DfE, 2023), Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people", DfE, updated 2024.

The policy should be read in conjunctions with the school's Behaviour Policies (Senior and Prep Schools) and its Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.