



## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

Elizabeth College deplores physical and mental cruelty and any form of threatening or coercive behaviour. We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. If bullying does occur all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a school where anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to speak to a member of staff.

### **i. Aims and objectives**

- That all staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of bullying and understand that it will not be tolerated.
- To create on the part of staff and pupils an awareness of bullying and an understanding of its causes allied to clear procedures for reporting bullying which are understood and followed.
- To foster an atmosphere of tolerance and mutual respect within the College community and so provide a safe and caring environment in which each pupil is afforded the opportunity to maximise his potential in all facets of College life.
- To promote a moral climate in which bullying is socially unacceptable and in which both victim and witness are at liberty to report any incident either directly, or via a third party.

### **ii. Definitions of Bullying**

Bullying may be defined as “the wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone.”

Examples of bullying behaviour are:

- hitting, kicking, pushing people around, spitting
- name calling, taunting, teasing, insulting
- intimidating, isolating or excluding from the group
- spreading rumours or writing unkind notes
- using improperly any form of e-technology, such as computers and mobile telephones
- taking, damaging or hiding possessions
- demanding money
- talking to or touching someone in a sexually inappropriate way

Other types of bullying include:

#### **Sexual bullying**

Sexual bullying involves unwanted and unwelcome attention of a sexual nature. This may be physical or verbal or involve the denigration of an individual on sexual grounds or by sexual means. Any unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment for the recipient may be regarded as sexual bullying.

#### **Racial bullying**

Racial bullying is offensive action and behaviour, deliberate or otherwise, relating to race, colour, ethnic or national origin directed at an individual or group, which is objectionable to the recipient and which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

### **Religious or Cultural Bullying**

Religious or Cultural Bullying involves offensive action and behaviour relating to a person's religion, belief or culture. This includes a broad definition of beliefs and cultures and includes minority religions, humanists, atheists and people of different nationalities.

### **Homophobic or sexual orientation bullying**

This is bullying directed at persons or groups on the grounds of a perceived or actual sexual orientation (applying equally to homosexual, heterosexual or bisexual boys or girls). In terms of sexual orientation, discrimination can occur because of an association with a gay or bisexual person (e.g. friend or relative).

### **Disability Bullying**

This is bullying in respect of a person's disability or impairment. This may be due to a physical disability or due to discrimination focused on a student's special educational needs.

### **Cyberbullying**

The term refers to any form of bullying that takes place using electronic technology, for example text messaging, picture or video-clips, email, chat rooms, social networks, instant messaging, social websites, photographs, web logs, online personal polling sites, personal websites and so on. The opportunities for bullying within this sphere are growing as the technology becomes more powerful.

The School has the following safeguards in place:

1. All students and members of staff are required to sign a statement of agreement as part of the Computer Access Policy.
2. All e-communications used on the school site or as part of school activities off-site are monitored.
3. All access to the Internet by students is filtered and bars are placed on a variety of unsuitable websites.
4. All students are made aware of the policy with regard to the use of mobile telephones.
5. The Learning for Life programme includes modules on bullying, including cyber bullying.
6. Members of staff are aware of the need to be vigilant and to act accordingly when a problem arises.

The Police may be informed of serious incidents involving cyber bullying.

The following website gives guidance on e-safety <http://www.swgfl.org.uk/Staying-Safe> and the Childline website [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk) is a useful source of advice for children.

### **iii. The seriousness of bullying**

All aspects of bullying behaviour affect the victim. A victim may be bullied because of his age, physical appearance, nationality, colour, gender, religion, or because he or she is new in the School, appears to be uncertain or has no friends. He or she may also become a target because of an irrational decision by the bully.

Bullying can seriously damage a young person's confidence and sense of self-worth, and they will often feel that they are at fault in some way. It can lead to serious and prolonged emotional damage for an individual and even suicide. Although victims often remain silent, changes of mood and behaviour can be indicative of their suffering. Victims can often feel helpless and overwhelmed by the power that the bully exercises. Vigilance with regards to any behavioural changes is important as early intervention is crucial. Those who conduct the bullying or witness the bullying can also experience emotional harm, and the impact on parents and school staff can be significant. Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.

The School recognises that bullying can occur: from staff to staff, from staff to student, from student to staff, and from student to student. While the School considers all forms of bullying unacceptable, this document focuses predominantly on the last category.

### **iv. Procedures in dealing with bullying**

**A.** Any student being bullied or knowing that someone is being bullied should report what is happening to his parents or guardians or to someone in authority within the School, in accordance with the School Code on Bullying. The following are available:

1. Tutor or any other teacher
2. Head of Year
3. A School prefect, House prefect or a senior student
4. The College Chaplain
5. A School Counsellor (contactable through the School Nurse)
6. The School Nurse
7. The Principal
8. The Child Protection Officer: Vice Principal (Pastoral)
9. The Deputy Child Protection Officer (Mr Slann)
10. A member of the Senior Management Team

They may also want to contact the duty Social Worker (01481 723182) or Childline (0800 1111) or the NSPCC (0808 800 5000).

Pupils should be encouraged to report incidents and to accept responsibility for the welfare of other pupils. Reported incidences of bullying behaviour should be referred to the boy's Head of Year.

**B.** A victim or a witness of bullying may be uncertain about taking this step, for a variety of reasons:

1. he or she does not want to tell tales
2. he or she does not want the bully to be punished
3. he or she is afraid of what the bully will do
4. he or she has become demoralised and feels that he or she does not deserve any better

- C. There should be an atmosphere within the School which encourages students to be completely open regarding bullying. Moreover, students should be encouraged to realise that it is always better to tell someone, because:
1. sharing what is happening will help the victim to deal with his feelings
  2. bullying thrives on secrecy – it is best dealt with by being brought into the open
  3. it may save other people from becoming victims of the same bully
- D. Any person in authority who learns of alleged bullying behaviour should:
1. firstly, offer advice and support to the alleged victim
  2. report the allegation to the Head of Year of the pupils involved (i.e. both victim and bully) as soon as possible.
- E. Heads of Year will record this on the Incident and Concerns form and, if they consider it appropriate, interview both the alleged victim and bully and any possible witnesses. These interviews will be recorded and filed in the relevant Year Group files, together with action taken in the case as a whole.

### Head of Year checklist in dealing with the victim

1. Reassure the victim that the matter will be taken seriously and will be dealt with accordingly.
2. Meet with the victim as soon as possible and ask for a written account of what has happened.
3. Meet with individual witnesses.
4. Help the victim to plan self-protective strategies and a response, if the incident should recur.
5. Agree action to be taken e.g. interview the bully etc.
6. Review date - arrange to see the victim in an agreed short period to review situation.
7. Report the action taken to the parents of the victim.
8. Possible referral to Vice Principal or Principal as relevant.

### Head of Year checklist in dealing with the bully

1. Meet with the bully as soon as possible and ask for a written record of what has happened (where, what, when and why?).
  2. Stress that it is the behaviour and not the person that is unacceptable.
  3. Suggest acceptable forms of behaviour (and highlight any good behaviour that the pupil has already demonstrated).
  4. Responsibility for any harm/hurt/damage must be accepted by the bully and, where appropriate, recompense made.
  5. Agree action and sanctions to be taken. Inform the bully that his behaviour will be closely monitored. The bully should be given help and support in trying to change their behaviour. Counselling should be available where appropriate.
  6. Where appropriate, the action taken is reported to the parents of the bully.
  7. A review date will be set to allow for positive changes to be acknowledged.
  8. Possible referral to the Vice Principal (in his capacity as head of the pastoral system or as designated teacher for child protection) or the Principal.
- F. In many cases where it is felt that bullying has taken place, the action in the first instance will not be disciplinary. It may sometimes be the case that the bully genuinely has not recognised the distress caused to the victim by his behaviour. It may also be judged preferable to issue a warning before sanctions are applied. However, if the student responsible for the bullying behaviour repeats it, sanctions are likely to be applied. Please see the College's Behaviour Management Policy for further details. Ultimately, a bully who does not change his behaviour may have to leave the School.

- G. It is essential that Heads of Year of both the victim and the bully continue to monitor the situation regularly. If the victim and the bully are from different Year Groups, the relevant Heads of Year should discuss their findings regularly during the first few weeks after an alleged incident, until they are satisfied that further incidents are unlikely. They should record their results on the year group 'Incident and Concerns' form.
- H. Heads of Year must notify the Vice Principal (Pastoral) of all alleged bullying incidents. The Heads of Year may, at their discretion, notify the Principal. Heads of Year may consider it advisable to notify parents of both the victim and the bully about the case and action taken.
- I. Heads of Year should consider sharing information with some or all colleagues, especially the Tutors of the pupils concerned. Some pupils may also be informed so that they may be alert to the need to monitor certain students closely.
- J. The welfare of the victim should be considered of paramount importance. The pupil should be informed of any actions taken. They may need help to deal with their feelings and to understand and overcome their vulnerability.
- K. If the Head of Year believes that bullying has occurred or is occurring involving a pupil in their year group or that bullying behaviour has occurred after warnings have been given to the bully, they may ask the Vice Principal (Pastoral) to conduct interviews within the guidelines set out below. They shall inform the Principal that they are taking this action:

### **Guidelines for the Child Protection Officer (VPP) to follow in dealing with alleged incident of bullying:**

1. The VPP interviews the alleged victim, bully and any witnesses separately, in order to establish the facts of the case. He may or may not ask the Head of Year to be present.
2. He sends a summary of his findings to the Principal.
3. The VPP or the Principal may notify the parents of the students concerned, informing them of action taken.
4. Relevant Heads of Year and Tutors monitor the situation and raise staff awareness of the specific situation.
5. The Chaplain, or another member of staff will ensure that the alleged victim and the alleged bully have an interview with him or an experienced member of staff when a reasonable length of time has elapsed after the incident. They may also decide that a specific group of students need further follow-up to address their behaviour patterns.

### **L. Recording procedures**

A written account of incidents of bullying should be placed in the files of those pupils involved.

- (i) Heads of Year should record all incidents of bullying on the 'Incidents and Concerns' form.
- (ii) Serious or persistent incidents should be reported to the Vice Principal or Principal.
- (iii) A pupil's persistent bullying behaviour that defies the College's attempts to satisfactorily address it by behavioural management strategies or disciplinary methods within a reasonable time should be reported to the designated teacher for child protection.
- (iv) Where appropriate, all staff are informed about the incident and the action taken.

- (v) **Parents of children involved should be informed by a senior member of staff in order that they may support their child and the College.**

If the victim does not feel that the procedure set out above has resolved the issue, he or she should inform either his Head of Year or the VPP or one of the people listed on page 3.

### **v. Raising awareness of staff through training and action to reduce the risk of bullying & use of all educational opportunities to address the issue.**

To reduce the risk of bullying an open, positive, caring and trusting atmosphere is nurtured in the School. Staff provide support, anticipate problems, and make opportunities to listen to students. Students are encouraged to share problems with staff, to speak up for their friends and peers, to look out for those more vulnerable members of the school and to not feel guilty about raising issues with teachers. Recommendations for improving the policy and procedures are encouraged. The policy will be kept under review and updated to be in line with best practice.

Bullying is a whole-school issue and as such the subject arises in a variety of curriculum areas. To raise awareness of bullying, all opportunities are taken to highlight the responsibilities of all members of the College to reduce the risk of bullying.

1. Bullying is formally addressed in Life Skills classes where the nature of bullying is explored and an attempt is made to develop self-protective strategies and appropriate responses.
2. Bullying is formally addressed each year in tutor periods and the College Code on Bullying is highlighted.
3. Where appropriate Year Group Assemblies and College Assembly are used to tackle the issue of bullying.
4. Posters on College notice boards to publicise the issues of bullying.
5. At all appropriate opportunities the message that bullying is unacceptable is reinforced and pupils are encouraged to foster positive attitudes and conduct in respect of the same.
6. Staff are made aware of the Anti-Bullying policy each September and new staff when they arrive at the College.
7. Regular questionnaires on bullying and where it may occur are carried out.
8. Policies on Child Protection and Bullying available to all parents.
9. There is an incident box where pupils can report anonymously any problems.
10. The College Code on Bullying is printed in the Pupil Diary.

#### **College Code on Bullying:**

All reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that, so far as it is possible, every student feels safe and happy at School and feels supported and protected at all times. The School expects all members of the School Community to uphold the College Code on Bullying:

1. Every student at Elizabeth College has the right to enjoy his learning and leisure time free from intimidation.
2. Our College Community will not tolerate unkind actions or remarks, even when these were not intended to hurt.
3. To stand by, when someone else is being bullied, is to support bullying. It is the responsibility of friends and peers to report incidences of bullying to a member of staff.

Friends and peers should not ignore what is happening and expect someone else to report the incidents.

4. If you are being bullied, or you know of someone who is being bullied you should report this to a member of staff or a responsible senior student.
5. Bullying will always be taken seriously.

### **Appendix 1: Teacher behaviour and signs and symptoms of bullying**

#### **1. Teacher behaviour**

Unwittingly or otherwise, a teacher may engage in, instigate or reinforce bullying behaviour by:

- (i) humiliating a pupil who is academically weak/outstanding or vulnerable in other ways;
- (ii) using sarcasm/negative comments with regards to a pupil's physical appearance or background;
- (iii) using gestures or expressions which are seen as intimidating and threatening.

#### **2. Signs and symptoms of bullying**

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware that the following are possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- Is unwilling to go to College or anxious about travelling to and from school;
- Develops a pattern of physical illness e.g. headaches;
- Changes in temperament and/or behaviour, for example by becoming withdrawn, disruptive or aggressive;
- Shows signs of anxiety or distress - difficulty in sleeping, not eating, crying etc;
- Has possessions, money and/or clothing damaged or missing;
- Starts stealing money (to pay bully);
- Has unexplained bruising or cuts;
- Declines in educational performance or loses enthusiasm and interest in College;
- Is frightened, reluctant or refusal to say what is troubling him.
- Attempts self-harm or runs away.

These signs and behaviours could result from other cause, but certainly bullying should be considered as a possibility. In particular, if there is a combination or repetitive occurrence of these symptoms, then further investigation is needed in order to determine what is affecting the pupil.

#### **3. Why does bullying occur?**

The reasons for bullying behaviour are complex and varied. Some common reasons are:

- (i) misguided belief that aggressive behaviour is "normal" or acceptable;
- (ii) to gain status in front of peers;
- (iii) to gain attention from significant adults;
- (iv) boredom;
- (v) extortion;
- (vi) to compensate for failure;
- (vii) bullying behaviour can be symptomatic of a victim of child abuse/neglect.

### Appendix 2: Dealing with bullying

This advice below is intended to help students who feel that they are being bullied. It is used as part of the Life Skills and tutorial curriculum.

If you are being bullied, there are a range of strategies you can adopt to deal with the situation:

- a. Always remember that no one deserves to be bullied - bullying is always the bully's fault. Bullies seek out and need victims and just happened to pick you.
- b. The best way to protect yourself from being bullied is to tell someone so that you can get some help. Tell a friend what is happening. Ask him/her to help you. It will be harder for the bully to pick on you if you have a friend with you for support.
- c. Ignore the bully or say "No" really firmly, then turn and walk away. Don't worry if people think you're running away. Remember, it is very hard for the bully to go on bullying someone who won't stand still to listen.
- d. Don't show that you are upset or angry. Bullies love to get a reaction. Keep calm and hide your emotions; the bully might get bored and leave you alone.
- e. Make up clever replies in advance. Replies don't have to be brilliant, but it helps to have an answer ready. Practise saying them at home. Being able to laugh at yourself in the first instance often helps prevent bullying, if bullies think you are sensitive about an issue he or she will try and get a reaction.
- f. Don't fight back if you can help it. If you fight back, you could make the situation worse, get hurt or be blamed for starting the trouble.
- g. Stick with a group, even if they are not your friends. Bullies tend to pick on people when they are on their own.
- h. Practise 'walking tall', look in a mirror. If you look positive and confident, the bully will find it harder to identify you as a target – even if you don't feel that way inside.
- i. Keep a diary about what is happening. Write down details of incidents and your feelings. When you decide to tell someone, a written record of the bullying makes it easier to prove what has been going on.
- j. Tell your parents or other adults such as your Tutor or Head of Year. You need their help. Don't suffer in silence and let the bullies win.
- k. Don't answer texts, emails or messages which are abusive. Log them and report them to your parents, a teacher, your tutor or the Head of Year. Don't delete them. You don't have to read them but you should keep them as evidence. Do not give out personal details on the internet or by text. If you use chat-rooms, always stay in the public areas. Don't answer texts, emails or messages from someone you don't know.

#### **If you have been bullied for a long time:**

If you have been bullied for a long time, you might start to believe what the bully says – you are ugly and awful and that no one will ever like you. This is not true: this is 'victim-think'. To help you start feeling better about yourself:

- Try doing some mental exercises to build up your self-confidence
- Make a list of all the good things you can think of about yourself. We all have talents. The next time you feel down, think about the good things on your list
- Learn to talk to yourself in a positive way: say, "I may not look like a film star, but I'm good at maths and I have a brilliant sense of humour!"

- If you have a particular interest, develop your skills, whatever they are
- Change your mobile phone number. Your service provider can do this

### Helpful approaches:

#### Saying no

- When you say NO, say it firmly
- Listen to your body and to your feelings: What do you really want to say?
- Try not to get caught up in arguments
- If you don't want to do something, don't give in to pressure. Be firm. When you say No to someone, you are only refusing the request. You are not rejecting the person.

#### 'Broken record'

- Stay calm and focussed
- Repeat over and over the same phrase (such as 'No' or 'I'm not interested')
- Make your phrase short and precise ("it's my pencil' or 'Go away')

#### Phone calls

- If you get an abusive or silent phone call, don't hang up immediately. Instead, put the phone down and walk away for a few minutes. Then hang up or turn your phone off. Once the bully realises they can't get you rattled, they usually get bored and stop bothering you. Always tell someone else.
- Use your voicemail to vet your calls.
- Remember that almost all calls can be traced.
- Get help from your network provider.

#### Emails

- Never reply to unpleasant emails. The sender wants a response – don't give them that satisfaction.
- Keep emails as evidence and tell an adult.
- Never reply to someone you don't know, even if there is an option to 'unsubscribe'. This simply confirms that your email address is a real one.
- Ask an adult to contact the sender's internet service provider by writing abuse@ then the host, eg abuse@hotmail.com

#### Take Your Time

- Once the bullying stops, many former victims say that they don't feel brilliant immediately. It takes time to get over bullying – you will feel better eventually.

There are some fantastic websites where you can get more advice and help, for example:

Bullying UK at [www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)

Childline at [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

Kidscape at [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

Wired Safety at [www.wiredsafety.org](http://www.wiredsafety.org)

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