



JAMES HOPE COLLEGE – ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 True to its foundation, James Hope College, through its pastoral system and the many different facets of College life, aims to foster healthy personal relations and create a positive, caring and supportive community. Therefore, with regard to a policy on prevention of bullying, James Hope College has a positive, definitive approach.

2. Background

- 2.1 It is essential that all staff should be aware of how bullying manifests itself, and the positive steps that need to be taken in responding to bullying.
- 2.2 Bullying does not just affect the bullies and the victims. Other children who see it happening, and so witness the distress of the victim, will suffer mental anguish. Bullying sours the atmosphere of a class and the climate of the College. Above all, pupils who are not aggressive by nature may be drawn into the taunting and tormenting of victims by group pressure or psychological factors.

3. Bullying in Colleges

- 3.1 Bullying takes many forms.

Bullying includes three main features:

- a) deliberate hostility and aggression intentionally directed at another individual
- b) a victim who is weaker and less able to respond than the bully or bullies
- c) an outcome which is always painful and distressing for the victim

Emotional bullying seems to be more commonplace than physical violence and can also be the most difficult type of bullying to cope with or to deal with.

Bullying can be short term or can continue over years. Bullying can be physical or verbal or even just a look. Bullying can be overt or subtle intimidation. Different teachers may define bullying differently, or put different interpretations on what they see.

- 3.2 Bullying is not just unprovoked physical aggression. It can include name-calling, teasing, jostling, punching, deliberate isolation, 'initiation ceremonies', unofficial disciplinary action, interference with property, sexual

harassment, intimidation, racial abuse, homophobia, extortion and use of technology or other written forms of communication. The victims suffer the physical and psychological abuse of their persons, isolation, loneliness, insecurity, anxiety and fear arising from a threatening atmosphere which surrounds them.

3.3 Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying which can happen 24/7, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click. It can include posting upsetting or defamatory remarks about an individual online and name-calling or harassment using mobile phones. These may be general insults or include prejudice-based bullying. Cyberbullies use their mobile phones or e mails to send sexist, homophobic and racist messages, or they attack other kinds of difference such as a physical or mental disability, cultural or religious background, appearance, or socio-economic position. In other cases bullies physically assault other children and post images of fights online or send recording via text messages or take photos to send to other people. Other unacceptable uses made of photographs include sexting or trolling.

3.4 The actions of the bully are such as:

- to exert power, overt or covert, over the bully's victims;
- to frighten or even terrorise, either through physical aggression or through psychological intimidation;
- to create an atmosphere in which the victim feels a constant sense of foreboding at the thought of being subjected to taunts, or threatened with violent behaviour, or actually attacked and humiliated, often in secret;
- to treat bullying almost as a tribal rite, with the onlookers participating or placed in the role of conspirators sworn not to expose the bully.

3.5 It is difficult to recognise bullies, in that they do not conform to a stereotype, based on popular misconception, about the category of pupil (e.g. inadequate, non-achievers, insecure) into which the bully falls.

3.6 The likely victims are often those who are vulnerable because they too easily become agitated, and in a state of extreme anxiety can be treated as figures of fun. Able and talented pupils can also be subjected to ridicule; in fact, potential victims can be anyone who is perceived as 'different' in any way, this could include any pupil/member of staff who might have any form of disability or be perceived of as being different.

4. A Policy to combat bullying

4.1 There are **THREE** elements to our anti bullying policy

- a. Prevention through the College ethos, teaching and pastoral support offered to pupils (part of the PSHE programme, assemblies, etc) thus creating a climate where bullying is seen as totally unacceptable and it is right to refer.
- b. Procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of bullying.
- c. Support to pupils who have been bullied and support and guidance to the bully.

5. Prevention

5.1 What sort of message does the College give about bullying? Part of the message is the way in which the victims are seen by staff, and whether victims are encouraged to speak out.

5.2 A whole College response aimed at implementing effective anti bullying procedures must take account of the need for preventative measures through:

- fostering the College ethos, promoting good discipline and acceptable patterns of behaviour among pupils, based on a proper respect for authority;
- the implementing of College policy and a strategic plan to reduce the incidence of bullying, linked to the College's pastoral system, involving all teaching staff and non-teaching staff, with the Senior Management Team responsible, through the Pastoral Teams, for coordinating the steps taken after cases of bullying have been reported.
- encourage staff to look for signs of potential problems before they happen. Staff should be aware that these are possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:
 - is unwilling to go to College
 - Increased illness visits to medical staff to miss lessons.
 - begins to do badly in College work
 - becomes withdrawn, starts stammering
 - regularly has clothes or books destroyed
 - becomes distressed, stops eating
 - cries easily

- becomes disruptive or aggressive
- has possessions go 'missing'
- has money continually 'lost'
- starts stealing (maybe to pay bully)
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- runs away or makes a cry for help by drastic actions of another kind
- Behaviour is significantly different without any known cause

These signs and behaviour could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and be investigated.

6. PROCEDURES

- 6.1 All staff must familiarise themselves with the College's anti bullying policy and the procedures and mechanisms for its implementation.
- 6.2 Pupils are to be encouraged to report that they are being bullied to anyone to whom they feel able to confide. Parents and guardians are also encouraged to report bullying. It must be understood that this information will be passed on to the appropriate authority.
- 6.3 Pupils who observe bullying are to be encouraged to report it to staff. Pupils need to realise that no one is a passive bystander. You are either for what is happening or against it.
- 6.4 All reported cases of bullying must be recorded and investigated.
- 6.5 The pupil who believes that they are being bullied will be questioned on their own to ascertain how serious the allegation is. The alleged bully will then be interviewed to discover whether they might have been provoked or the one being 'bullied' is being over sensitive. Any witnesses, especially any who might be deemed 'neutral' may also be interviewed. In some cases it might be right to talk to 'victim' and 'bully' together.
- 6.6 In some cases the problem may be seen as a misunderstanding or a breakdown in personal relations that can be 'talked through' in a way that is mutually satisfactory and an agreement or solution found.
- 6.7 If the alleged bullying is seen to be true then the bully will be severely reprimanded and have explained exactly the degree of hurt and distress that their behaviour has caused. They will be warned that if s/he persists in this behaviour s/he will be suspended or expelled. In very severe cases a pupil may be suspended / expelled in the first instance.

6.8 A report of the incident will be kept and the bully will be allowed to read it. The pupil will be informed that if there are no further incidents whilst a pupil at the College, then after one year the report will be destroyed.

6.9 The parents/guardians of both victim and bully will be fully informed at all stages of the incident(s), the investigations and the action taken.

7. Support to Victims and Bullies

7.1 In all cases where anyone reports bullying they will be told of the outcome. Where serious action is taken pupils and staff will always be informed and the situation explained.

7.2 The victim will be carefully monitored and encouraged to talk about their reactions and, especially any repercussions. Victims will be given every support and encouragement by the College. The bullies will be given a fair hearing and any issues arising will be addressed. They will be helped in finding mechanisms to see that there is no recurrence of the problem(s).

7.3 Parents will be contacted to make sure that they can give a report of improvement and to check what further support the College can give.

8. Conclusion

8.1 If the problem of bullying is not dealt with firmly it can seriously harm the prospects of a small minority of vulnerable, isolated and frightened pupils who are the victims of bullying behaviour, with incalculable and even tragic consequences. These pupils' lives are being made a misery because they have been singled out by the bullies for physical assault or verbal abuse.

8.2 Pupils who feel threatened must be able to report their fears in the knowledge that the bully will be firmly dealt with.

8.3 Strong sanctions such as exclusion may be necessary in cases of severe and persistent bullying. As a last resort, students may be expelled from the College and the reasons notified to the College Governors.

8.4 Above all, if bullying is allowed to go unchallenged, the bully, the victim and all the pupils and staff will suffer from the College's failure to deal with a problem that adversely affects the whole College environment and prevents it from being a protective, caring and positive support to those within it.