COTTESMORE SCHOOL
ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Contents

Consultants

The following personnel have advised on various aspects of this document:

- *LADO West Sussex (Local Authority Designated Officer)*
- *Chief Inspector ISI*: Vanessa Ward
- *Kidscape* personnel http://www.kidscape.org.uk/
- *Brave the Rage* personnel http://www.bravetherage.co.uk/
- *Safeguarding In Schools*: consultant Andrew Hall www.safeguardinginschools.co.uk/
- *Vice-Chairman of Governors Handcross Primary School*: WPC Fowler

Improvements to the Procedure

The Anti-bullying Procedure is under constant scrutiny and the latest improvement has been the digitalisation of data, so it is easier to track trends of geography, timing and incident type. The Head, Deputy Head, DSL and Head's Wife are trained to input data, until resolution, after an incident has been logged initially by the Member of Staff.

This policy should be read alongside the school's Child Protection Safeguarding Policy and Cyberbullying Policy

The information gathered through the initial recording of the incident in the Stripe System is now migrated automatically to a new area of the Database in the pupil's Profile Folders. This allows for: more sophisticated and quicker scrutiny of trends of particular pupils; types of bullying; and makes it easier to add information after the incident has been logged by the Member of Staff. The discussion of Trend Spotting will occur at the weekly SMT meeting.

Last reviewed by Compliance Officer April 2024
To be reviewed December 2025

COTTESMORE SCHOOL

Definition of bullying

Bullying is the willful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten, upset or frighten anyone; the term 'bullying' should be applied to persistent or repeated incidents of teasing or negative behaviour that causes stress in another. Bullying can be based around many different issues: racial, religious, cultural, sexual/sexist, homophobic, and disability. Bullying creates suffering in a victim.

Aims and Objectives

According to the Equality Act, schools and colleges must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, or sexual orientation (protected characteristics).

Cottesmore School aims to be a caring community where individual and collective responsibilities are paramount, where children and staff are treated equitably regardless of race, ethnic origin, nationality, gender, disability, age, religion, sexual orientation, marital/parental status, political belief and social/economic group. These are referred to as 'protected characteristics'. As such Cottesmore School adopts a 'zero-tolerance' of bullying and moreover, puts in place education and systems that will spot early signs and as part of early help, prevent issues from escalating. Cottesmore School also recognises that bullying in all its forms takes place within all schools, and that it can be found within households, associations and the wider community. As far as possible, the school through its pastoral care system of Tutors and Staff, and through its programme of Personal, Social and Health education (PSHEe), seeks to heighten awareness of this problem and its causes, and through appropriate training, policies and procedures aims to eradicate it from the School.

Children who are lesbian, gay, bi, or trans (LGBT). The fact that a child or a young person may be LGBT is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. However, children who are LGBT can be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be LGBT (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBT. Risks can be compounded where children who are LGBT lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. It is therefore vital that staff endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced and provide a safe space for them to speak out or share their concerns with members of staff. LGBT inclusion is part of the statutory Relationships Education, Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education curriculum and there is a range of support available to help schools counter homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and abuse.

At Cottesmore we believe that all pupils are entitled to a safe and secure environment and consequently we consider bullying to be a very serious offence. Staff are alert to children who may be vulnerable and at risk of bullying. If bullying does occur, at Cottesmore, we aim to:

- To prevent, de-escalate and/or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour.
- To react to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way.
- To safeguard the pupil who has experienced bullying and to trigger sources of support for the pupil.

- To apply disciplinary sanctions to the pupil causing the bullying and ensure they learn from the experience, possibly through multi-agency support.

Whilst bullying happens infrequently at Cottesmore, we acknowledge that it can occur. Cottesmore will encourage pupils to report bullying in confidence using various channels. However, if pupil safety is at risk then school staff cannot keep the information confidential. Staff are expected to use their judgement when speaking to the pupil about this.

It is important to understand that perceptions may differ. What one person considers to be just teasing could be perceived by another to be an act of bullying. A person's intent or desire is not always easy to gauge. We must neither be too quick to accuse nor must we be complacent when a complaint is made. It is the victim that decides whether they consider themselves to have been bullied or not. However, we must make aware that bullying is very serious and can in some cases cause psychological damage and even suicide (although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour).

Bullying: A Safeguarding Issue

At Cottesmore, all incidences of suspected bullying are a potential Safeguarding issue and therefore the DSL is involved in the process from the start. Where concerns are raised to the DSL, external agencies may be contacted for advice and / or referral. The school follows procedures outlined in our Child Protection Safeguarding Policy.

Procedures if bullying is reported

Stage 1: Logging

Staff will log the incident on the Wellbeing section of the school's database as soon as possible. The member of staff who first discovered the incident will write their own notes about it. If the notes are on paper, they will be added to the log and emailed to the Head, Deputy Head and the DSL. These accounts and any subsequent emails can then be printed off in hard copy if copies are required when speaking with parents.

The Head and the Deputy Head are automatically notified through the database system. The DSL is also notified automatically as every incident of bullying is a safeguarding matter.

Action and notes for staff:

1. Where? iSams >> Rewards and Sanctions >> Stripes.
2. Give any notes on paper to the Head, Deputy Head & DSL.
3. The Deputy Head can decide if a sanction is required.

Stage 2: Taking the Incident Forward

The Head and/or the Deputy Head will review the account written by the relevant member of staff who has been dealing with the incident and/or take notes themselves.

The pupils involved will be interviewed separately by the Head or the Deputy Head. In some cases the pupils will be asked to write down their own account. The accounts will be added to their files.

Where the incident is deemed to be a safeguarding issue, a referral to external agencies (LADO, CAP and Police) may or may not be made in accordance with the school's Child Protection Safeguarding Policy.

Stage 3: Sanctions and Repair

The Head and/or the Deputy Head will review the incident and decide on the next steps for the individuals involved.

Having been awarded a 'Stripe' through the database, one or more of the following school disciplinary actions may be taken (please note that being awarded a Stripe is not a sanction in itself - a Stripe is part of the recording mechanism):

- Completing a Conduct File in detention and loss of Free Time
- Letters of apology written
- Writing a list of ways to improve may be written
- Community Service (eg helping clear plates after lunch)
- An advisory Tutoring session with the Head or Deputy Head on suitable conduct and strategies. It will be made clear to the perpetrator that their behaviour is unacceptable and will also be offered guidance on how to change their behaviour.
- Removal of free time and exclusion from a section of the day.
- Removal from all free time for a day or more.
- Internal suspension for a day or more.
- Suspension
- Expulsion

As written above, in serious cases, suspension or expulsion may be the only option. If this is the case, then the parents/guardians of all parties should be informed and invited into school to discuss the matter. Their support should be sought. A way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and counselling, should be agreed.

Records on any bullying outside of the school will also be kept in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach adopted or to enable patterns to be identified. This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for children who are being bullied and for pupils who bully others, as well as dealing with appropriate disciplinary measures. Any incident of a safeguarding nature, occurring inside or outside of school will be reported to either the LADO or the Children's Access Point for further advice. Where an incident is outside of school, parents will be involved in the procedure.

Monitoring and Review

Monitoring and review will be undertaken by the Head and the Deputy Head for the time that the child remains at Cottesmore and will be identified on the Wellbeing wizard.

Children who continue to give cause for concern will be monitored by the Head and the Staff at weekly SMT and Staff Meetings. All incidents are recorded on the minutes/iSams which is able to track underlying themes and spot patterns of behaviour in terms of locations, timings and children involved. Through the log, the teachers within the school are able to track specific triggers for behaviour in certain children.

In very serious cases, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police, the LADO or Social Services via the Children's Access Point. The school may also contact these external agencies for advice.

The school may exclude a pupil, temporarily or permanently, in cases of severe and persistent bullying and in the event that the support put in place for the bully does not result in the modification of behaviour to an acceptable level.

EYFS and Pre-prep

EYFS Parents and Staff should read this policy in conjunction with the school's Child Protection Safeguarding Policy.

Even the youngest children are encouraged to behave towards each other with kindness and consideration. They have to learn to look after their own possessions and to respect other's possessions.

We expect them to be honest, helpful and polite, and to work hard and to listen to others. They should respect everyone and learn to value differences and diversity.

Sophie Baker, the Head of the Pre-prep department, is in day-to-day charge of the management of the behaviour in the Pre-prep. We explain to children why some forms of behaviour are unacceptable and hurtful to others. We rarely need to impose sanctions but sometimes we may remove a treat for hurtful behaviour.

Very occasionally a child may be sent to see the Principal of the Pre-prep, Mrs Rogerson, who will explain the inappropriateness of a particular action, but such instances are rare. Parents are always informed.

If hurtful or inappropriate behaviour continues then the parents of the child involved will be invited in to discuss the situation with their child's teacher and the Head of the Pre-prep department and to agree how best to handle the difficulty.

Parents of EYFS and Pre-prep children are made aware of our complaints procedure (which is published on our website) if they feel that their concerns about bullying (or anything else) are not being addressed properly. Parents of EYFS and Pre-prep children should also be made aware that they have the right to refer a complaint directly to the ISI if they are unhappy with the way which their complaint has been handled.

Raising Awareness of Bullying

The Cottesmore Staff have received Anti-bullying training sessions by Julie Wilkinson who trains for Kidscape, BSA and runs her own company, Brave the Rage. Staff are also regularly trained through Educare Learning Limited. Staff, parents and children are also trained in preventing Cyberbullying and Online bullying by Karl Hopwood, who also coaches all three groups in strategies for empowering strong mental health. Staff has also received training in 'The Wellbeing Hub' which is now being used across the school. The Wellbeing Hub Newsletters are regularly posted onto the school website for the parents to see. Staff and parents also received training from 'Girls on Board' in January 2022.

Staff are trained in order to raise their awareness of bullying and taught how to take action to reduce the risk of bullying when and where it is most likely to happen. Using educational elements such as PSHE, afternoon presentations, form time, pastoral tutor group meetings and assemblies ('Chapel Line-up' at Cottesmore) children are made aware of the varying types of bullying that may occur.

We encourage pupils to support each other by reporting bullying at once to a member of staff, parent or another person. As part of the training received by the staff and children in June 2022 and November 2022 by 'The Prime Agency', they are taught not to be a Bystander. A copy of Cottesmore's "Happiness Charter" is posted in each classroom and dorm. The Happiness Charter contains information about the 'Worry Box' - in which children can post notes anonymously - the Independent Listener (Amelia Calvert), Child Line and the Children's Rights Director.

Staff and children have received further training from boy band 'Here at Last' who spoke with the entire school about bullying online. She spent an afternoon talking with all of the Cottesmore community about the dangers of online bullying and the enormously damaging effects it can have on a wide range of people.

In May 2022 Karl Hopwood visited Cottesmore to give training talks to parents and staff. Mr Hopwood talked to the children about online and cyber bullying as well.

Bullying will continue to be a problem when it is kept secret. We will offer advice and support for both the victim and the bully whilst at the same time applying appropriate sanctions which reflect the context of the incident. The school considers that any pupil witnessing bullying without taking action to prevent it is in collusion with it, thereby making a contribution.

It is essential to note that children with Special Educational Needs are particularly vulnerable to bullying. They are especially susceptible to bullying and thereby warrant closer surveillance by teachers and adults within Cottesmore.

The school responds promptly and efficiently with bullying issues. Pupils and parents acknowledge that the school deals effectively with bullying. All staff work hard pastorally to sustain this enviable reputation. Every SMT and Staff meeting agenda contains a section on Bullying Trend Spotting, to highlight the importance of sharing information and encouraging staff to talk about worrying trends, regardless of the apparent size.

When dealing with incidents, the school staff aims to change attitudes in the children, and therefore behaviour, by education as well as sanction. Cottesmore is keen to assist and support the bully whenever possible and necessary, and we understand that an act of bullying can frequently be a cry for help from a vulnerable person.

As stated above, a parent is informed when there have been repeated offences of bullying or if the case is deemed to be serious by the Headmaster and Deputy Head. Pastoral care will be offered and provided for both the bully and the bullied by means of mentoring by a selected member of staff or the school counsellor. If and where necessary, external agencies may be contacted.

The Anti-bullying Policy is reviewed termly to assess its effectiveness and any necessary changes to procedure are implemented.

IN SERIOUS CASES, SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION WILL BE CONSIDERED

Bullying falls into two main categories, physical and verbal. Physical bullying is usually the easier to spot. Verbal bullying can be the more pernicious and difficult to deal with.

Bullying can be based around many different issues: racial, religious, cultural, sexual/sexist, homophobic, and disability.

Bullying can be:

- Physical: e.g. punching, kicking, pinching, pushing, poking
- Verbal: e.g. teasing, name-calling
- Digital: e.g. text messages, social networking online, email, photographs
- Emotional: e.g. exclusion from a group, taking possessions

Children should be encouraged to be kind to others, to "keep their hands and feet to themselves" and, if they have nothing nice to say, not to say anything at all. The school rules tell pupils to treat others as they would wish to be treated themselves.

The following may be, but are not necessarily, signs of bullying:

- introverted behaviour
- complaints of unhappiness
- reluctance to come to school
- seeking adult company
- attention seeking
- short concentration span
- uncharacteristic behaviour

No mobile phones are allowed in the school and must be handed in as soon as a pupil enters the building. Pupils are encouraged to talk to each other face to face and discouraged from communicating with each other via email during term time. Content on all school computer applications is monitored by Webtitan, a safeguarding tool which screen-captures harmful content and sends an alert via email to the Deputy Head for further investigation. We also have strong filters in place which bar the pupils from accessing unsuitable material on the internet. Pupils are given regular guidance through PSHE, pastoral groups and visiting speakers on the expectations of the use of technology within school, and guidance on appropriate use of technology out of school. Staff are trained regularly in the use of mobile phones, cameras and other devices in and out of school, particularly in the use of social media. Online safety advice can be found for parents, staff, pupils and visitors on www.cottesmoreschool.com/pastoral-care/online-safety-and-cyber-bullying

Further Information

Further information and help for children, teachers and parents can be found on the internet at www.kidscape.org. Also the website called: www.rights4me.org provides a useful insight into bullying seen from children's perspectives using surveys carried out with children who live in all manner of environments away from home. Guidance from DfE can also be found in 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (last updated in July 2017) - www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying

COTTESMORE SCHOOL

Glossary

- DSL = Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Chapel Line-up = Cottesmore assembly
- CAP = Children's Access Point