

# Gordon's School

## Anti-Bullying and Cyber-Bullying Policy ([Appendix 1 – Cyber-bullying Policy](#))

The core principle that guides everything we do is **Putting Students First**.

### Introduction

At Gordon's School we aim to provide a safe, caring and friendly environment for all our students to allow them to learn effectively, improve their life chances and help them maximise their potential. Our community is based upon the values of courtesy, integrity, diligence, enthusiasm and resilience. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so that every one of our students can develop to his or her full potential. We expect our students to treat members of staff with courtesy and cooperation so that they can learn in a purposeful atmosphere. All students should care for and support each other, inside and outside of the school.

Bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination of students or staff will not be tolerated. The school does not allow initiation/ hazing rituals to take place and any incidents of such will be managed following this policy. We treat all students and their parents fairly, and with consideration, and we expect them to respect the staff, the School and each other, in return. All forms of bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based bullying and discriminatory bullying) are unacceptable at school and any instances of bullying will be recorded and, where appropriate, will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The school is committed to reduce bullying and improve wellbeing for students. Our work and involvement in the United Against Bullying (UAB) programme was recognised by achieving United Against Bullying **GOLD** School status.

### This policy takes account of guidance from the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- Department for Education "Preventing and tackling bullying: Advice for July 2017"
- Department for Education "Behaviour and discipline in schools" Advice for School Leaders, Staff and Governing Bodies and school staff (September 2022)
- National Minimum Standards for Boarding (September 2022); Standard 15: Promoting positive behaviour and Standard 17: Promoting good relationships

### Policy Development

- This policy was formulated in consultation with the whole school community with input from Members of staff, governors, parents/carers, children and young people.
- Students contribute to the development of the policy through the Boarders' Council, the Anti-bullying Ambassadors, and the Junior & Senior Prefects
- The Anti-bullying Ambassadors develop student friendly posters and messages to be displayed around the school and in houses.
- Parents/Carers will be encouraged to contribute annually through the GSPA.

### Links with other policies

- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy - Cyberbullying and internet safety
- Equalities Policy - Race, Sexist, Sexual, Transphobic, Homophobia, SEN and Disability
- PSHE and Citizenship Policy

- Complaints Policy

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Head Teacher has overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation and liaising with the governing body, parents/carers, and outside agencies and appointing an Anti-bullying coordinator who will have general responsibility for handling the implementation of this policy.

The Anti-bullying Coordinator in our school is: **Mrs S Forster (Assistant Head, Pastoral)**.

Responsibilities include:

- Meeting with all students in Houses at the beginning of every year
- Presenting anti-bullying assemblies every term
- Meeting with Anti-bullying Ambassadors and providing Anti-bullying training
- Co-ordinating anti-bullying activities in National Anti-bullying Week
- Collating minutes of Anti-bullying Ambassadors' Meetings
- Policy development and review involving students, staff, governors, parents/carers and relevant local agencies
- Implementing the policy and monitoring and assessing its effectiveness in practice
- Ensuring evaluation takes place and that this informs policy review
- Managing bullying incidents
- Managing the reporting and recording of bullying incidents
- Assessing and coordinating training and support for staff and parents/carers where appropriate
- Coordinating strategies for preventing bullying behaviour

### **Definition of Bullying**

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Put another way, bullying is the intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another person. It may take many forms, including physical (including any threat of or use of violence of any kind), sexual (including the sharing of nudes/semi-nudes), verbal (including cyber-bullying via text messages, email, social media, gaming, and SMS or other instant messages), and emotional (including by excluding, being sarcastic, name-calling, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone, or actions that fall short of direct participation, where someone encourages others to bully, or joins in with laughing at a victim. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidating, and often involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim whether that be a physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone) or intellectual imbalance, or by the perpetrator having the capacity to socially isolate the victim.

Bullying is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups and may involve actions or comments regarding a person's race, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, special education needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain health conditions, or because of a child's familial circumstances, such as they are adopted, in care or that they have caring responsibilities. Bullying may be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. For example, bullying can still be homophobic if directed towards a child that is perceived to be gay, whether this is the case.

Bullying can happen anywhere (including online) and at any time and can involve anyone - students, other young people, staff and parents. Although bullying can occur between individuals it can often take place in the presence (virtually or physically) of others who become the 'bystanders'. There is no hierarchy of bullying – all forms should be taken equally seriously and dealt with appropriately.

### **Bullying can take place between:**

- Young people
- Young people and staff
- Between staff
- Individuals or groups

### **Signs of Bullying**

All members of the school community must be alert to the signs of bullying. These may include (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Unwillingness to return to school
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing, or are damaged
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary)
- Diminished levels of self-confidence leading to psychological damage
- Frequent visits to the health centre with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches
- Frequently waiting to speak to the teacher at the end of lessons
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- Choosing the company of adults
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping, experiences nightmares
- Talking of suicide or running away
- Excessive use of phone/mobile device

Note: this is not an exhaustive list.

### **Strategies for Preventing Bullying**

The school's response to bullying does not start at the point in which a pupil has been bullied. We take the following preventative measures in order to create an environment that prevents bullying from becoming a problem at the school in the first place.

#### **Whole School**

1. The School promotes an ethos of good behaviour where students treat each other with respect at all times, inside and outside of the school.
2. The school is working towards forming an anti-bullying partnership with core stakeholders, who meet termly. This partnership will have the Student Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, the Anti-Bullying Governor, the Assistant Head (Pastoral) and Pastoral Mentors as members.
3. Anti-bullying literature, including information about the student Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, are visible around the School (including one of the School's digital screens) and in houses.
4. Anti-bullying assemblies are regular and the School takes part in celebrations such as Anti-Bullying Week.
5. All new students (day and residential boarders) are briefed thoroughly on the school values and expected standards of behaviour. They are told what to do if they encounter bullying.
6. Other lessons as well as assemblies and Chapel services regularly highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by developing social skills and by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable.
7. All of our students are encouraged to tell any member of staff at once if they are being bullied, or if they know or suspect that bullying is taking place. They are reassured that they will be taken seriously and will be supported and kept safe.

8. All students are asked to look out for each other and report concerns to staff. This can be done face to face or via the online reporting system. Students are regularly shown and reminded of how to do this in House meetings and assemblies.

### **Policy**

1. The School's Anti-Bullying Policy complies with the Department for Education and Surrey County Council guidance and indicates links with other school policies.
2. The policy has been ratified by governors and includes a commitment to annual review.
3. The policy is readily accessible for staff, students and parents on the School website and is issued to all parties annually.
4. The anti-bullying policy includes a clear complaints procedure for use if incidents have not been dealt with to the satisfaction of victims or their parents.
5. The School has an agreed system for recording and investigating bullying incidents. This includes routine follow ups with the students involved.
6. Data is analysed to inform practice and is reported to governors.
7. There is a focus on restorative approaches and follow up with victims; this has been developed in conjunction with pupils and parents and is available in a pupil friendly version.
8. The policy is clear about likely sanctions.

### **Support**

1. The School provides clearly defined pathways for members of the school community to communicate their concerns about bullying.
2. School has a system in place that supports friendships and positive relationships.
3. Students and parents are aware of useful anti-bullying helplines, websites etc. are available in school and this info is regularly updated.
4. Parents have a clear understanding of who to contact in school and have a clear understanding of what action will be taken in relation to bullying of, or by their child.
5. Parents are informed about what is and what is not bullying at the start of year Parents' Information Evenings (PIE)
6. Key staff are aware of pupils at risk of being bullied and actively provide support for them.
7. Through satisfaction surveys, report that they feel safe in school and the school has evidence of its support for them.
8. When dealing with bullying, the needs of all parties are recognised and addressed and the school monitors evidence of this through satisfaction surveys.
9. School monitors and evaluates strategies to help members of the school community feel safe. The strategies used are recorded in the anti-bullying log.
10. School has a peer support system that has been established for at least 12 months with monitoring and evaluation processes in place.

### **Curriculum**

1. School offers regular planned opportunities in different subject areas, including the IT curriculum, PSHE/citizenship, drama, history and IT safety lessons.
2. The ethos of the school clearly demonstrates that anti-bullying approaches are also evident in the hidden curriculum for example the example set by staff interactions with colleagues, parents and students.

### **Training**

1. All members of staff have attended basic anti-bullying awareness training.
2. Duty staff receive specific training at the start of year.
3. Key members of staff are aware of the latest research and are trained in using a range of specialised anti-bullying strategies for example solution focused approaches, mediation, and restorative approaches.

## **REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING**

Our school has clear and well publicised systems to report bullying for the whole school community (including staff, parents/carers, children and young people) this includes those who are the targets of bullying or have witnessed bullying behaviour (bystanders)

All reported incidents will be taken seriously and investigated involving all parties.

- Interviewing all parties
- Informing parents
- A range of responses appropriate to the situation: - solution focused, restorative approach, circle of friends, individual work with the target, perpetrator, referral to outside agencies if appropriate
- Referral to Behaviour policy and school sanctions and how these may be applied including what actions may be taken if bullying persists
- Follow up especially keeping in touch with the person who reported the situation, parents/carers
- Support for the target(s) and the perpetrator(s)

### **Recording Bullying and Evaluating the Policy**

Bullying incidents will be recorded by the member of staff who deals with the incident on and passed to the Anti-bullying coordinator (Assistant Head Pastoral).

The information we hold will be used to ensure individual incidents are followed up. It will also be used to identify trends and inform preventative work in school and development of the policy.

This information will be presented to the governors in an anonymous format as part of the Pastoral Report.

The policy will be reviewed and updated annually.

### **Complaints Procedure**

Parents and pupils should use our Complaints Procedure (which is published on our website for parents and in houses for students) if they feel that any concerns about bullying (or anything else) are not being addressed properly.

# Appendix 1: Cyber Bullying Policy

## Introduction

Gordon's School embraces the advantages of modern technology in terms of the educational benefits it brings. However, the school is mindful of the potential for bullying to occur. Central to the School's anti-bullying policy is the belief that 'all students have a right not to be bullied' and that 'bullying is always unacceptable'. The school also recognises that it must 'take note of bullying perpetrated outside school which spills over into the school'. We will take action against cyber-bullying, or any bullying aspects carried out by students, even at home.

## Definition of Cyber-Bullying

Cyber-bullying can be defined as "the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others" (Belsey, <http://www.cyber-bullying.org/>). It is an aggressive, intentional act often carried out repeatedly over time, and often against a victim who cannot easily defend himself/ herself. The School acknowledges that cyber-bullying may take place inside School, outside of School and at any time of the day.

Cyber-bullying could involve communications by various electronic media, including for example:

- Texts, instant messages or calls on mobile phones
- The use of mobile phone camera images to cause distress, fear or humiliation
- Posting threatening, abusive, sexual, discriminatory, offensive or humiliating material or comments on websites (including blogs, personal websites and social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or YouTube)
- Using e-mail to message others in a threatening or abusive manner
- Hijacking/ cloning e-mail accounts

The School acknowledges that cyber-bullying may take many different forms including: cyber-stalking, exclusion or peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorised publication of private information or images, encouraging derogative comments on online platforms, up skirting and sexting.

Examples of cyber-bullying may include:

- Sending nasty calls or text messages, instant messages or emails including anonymous emails, threats, intimidation and harassment;
- Using electronic media to send homophobic, racist and sexist messages to another individual or posting any such comment on a social network site;
- Videoing other people being harassed and sending these to other phones or internet sites;
- Taking or sharing humiliating images;
- Sending nasty, threatening or anonymous messages using chatrooms or message boards; making friends under false pretences; groups of people deciding to pick on or ignore individuals;
- Using someone else's account to forward rude or mean emails; forwarding unsuitable content including images or clips or sending computer viruses;
- Making and sending inappropriate content using a webcam;
- Posting nasty comments, humiliating images or video on social networking sites;
- Accessing another person's account details and sending unpleasant messages, deleting information or making private information public.

Note: this is not an exhaustive list.

What can sometimes make cyberbullying feel harder to manage can be the following:

- Cyberbullying can take place 24/7, creating a feeling of "no escape" for the target and is not restricted by location
- Electronic content is very hard to control once it has been posted and can never be guaranteed to be removed totally from circulation; this can be very upsetting to victims as they can never be sure who has viewed images or content about them.
- Perpetrators can attempt to be anonymous and can feel "distanced" from the incident. They are often unaware of the laws regarding harassment and the fact online activity can be traced via "digital footprints."
- "Bystanders" can easily become perpetrators by passing on videos, image or content, or by videoing incidents.
- Cyberbullying can occur unintentionally, often due to a lack of awareness and empathy, or by thinking "It was only a joke."

### **Legal Issues**

- It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information in any media including internet sites.
- The Malicious Communications Act 2012 makes it an offence to send, by public means of a public electronic communications network, a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or one of an indecent, obscene or menacing character.
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.

### **Policy**

- Gordon's School educates its students both in the proper use of information technology (IT) and about the serious consequences of cyber-bullying and will, through PSHE and in IT lessons and assemblies, continue to inform and educate its students in these fast changing areas.
- The School trains its staff to respond effectively to reports of cyber-bullying or harassment and has systems in place to respond to it. The Online-safety Co-ordinator reviews systems, practices and incidents each term and this is reported to Governors.
- The School endeavours to block access to inappropriate websites using firewalls, antivirus protection and filtering systems. Where appropriate and responsible, Gordon's School monitors and audits IT communications and regularly reviews the security arrangements in place.

Whilst education and guidance remain at the heart of what we do, Gordon's reserves the right to take action against those who take part in cyber-bullying.

- All bullying is damaging but cyber-bullying and harassment can be invasive of privacy at all times. These acts may also be criminal acts.
- Gordon's supports targets and, when necessary, will work with the police to detect those involved in criminal acts.
- Gordon's will use, as appropriate, the full range of sanctions to correct, punish or remove students who bully fellow students or harass staff in this way, both in or out of school.
- Gordon's will use its power of confiscation where necessary to prevent students from committing crimes or misusing equipment.
- All members of the School community are aware they have a duty to bring to the attention of staff any example of cyber-bullying or harassment that they know about or suspect.

### **Guidance for Staff**

If you suspect or are told about a cyber-bullying incident, staff should follow the protocol outlined below. The School's Online-safety Co-ordinator will investigate all concerns in the first instance.

### **Mobile Devices**

- Advise the student to save or screenshot any offensive material
- Confiscate the mobile device which received or sent the alleged offensive material and pass it to the Deputy Head Pastoral. If the content is of a sexual nature, do not forward or take a screen shot of the image(s).
- Record any detail that you may have seen, or heard was on the device
- Send the student to the Deputy Head (Pastoral) or the Assistant Head (Pastoral)

### **Computers**

- Ask the student to display on screen the material in question
- Ask the student to save the material
- Print off the offending material straight away
- Accompany the student, taking the offending material, to the Deputy Head/Assistant Head
- Normal procedures to interview students and to take statements will then be followed particularly if a child protection issue is presented.

### **Guidance for Students**

If you believe you or someone else is the target of cyber-bullying, you must speak to an adult as soon as possible. This person could be a parent/guardian, your tutor, your Head of House, the Online-safety Co-ordinator or the Deputy Head (Pastoral).

- Do not answer offensive messages but log and report them
- Do not delete anything until it has been shown to school staff (even if it is upsetting, the material is important evidence which may need to be used later as proof of cyber-bullying)
- Do not give out personal IT details
- Never reply to offensive emails
- Never reply to someone you do not know
- Stay in public areas in chat rooms.

### **Guidance for Parents**

It is vital that parents and the school work together to ensure that all students are aware of the serious consequences of getting involved in anything that might be seen to be cyber-bullying. Gordon's informs parents of the cyber-bullying policy and the procedures in place to deal with cyber-bullying.

- Parents can help by making sure their child understands the School's policy and, above all, how seriously Gordon's takes incidents of cyber-bullying
- Parents should also explain to their sons or daughters legal issues relating to cyber-bullying
- If parents believe their child is the target of cyber-bullying, they should save the offending material (if need be by saving a screenshot of their child's mobile phone) and make sure they have all relevant information before deleting anything
- Parents should contact the Online-safety Co-ordinator or the Deputy Head (Pastoral) as soon as possible
- If the incident falls out of school hours Gordon's reserves the right to take action against bullying perpetrated outside the school which affects students in school.

### **Online-Safety At Home**

Parents are encouraged to operate strict supervision of internet and social media use at home. The school will provide advice and training to parents to support them in this. Parents are encouraged to speak to the Deputy Head (Pastoral) about any concerns they may have about their child's use of the internet and social media at home.

## **ICT Acceptable Use Policy**

Parents and students are sent a copy of the school's acceptable use policies and students sign to acknowledge that they understand their responsibilities when using either their own or the school's ICT facilities.

## **Complaints Procedure**

Parents and pupils should use our Complaints Procedure (which is published on our website for parents and in houses for students) if they feel that any concerns about bullying (or anything else) are not being addressed properly.

**Ms Helen Carruthers**  
**Deputy Head (Pastoral)**  
**July 2025**