

Anti-Bullying policy

The School's behaviour policy builds upon the excellent work which has gone on in Spalding High School over many years in encouraging good behaviour and respect for others within the whole community. We have always taken seriously our shared responsibility to prevent and tackle bullying of all kinds and to protect the wellbeing of all young people. This is done within a strong community in which diversity is valued.

Aims of policy

- To establish clearly that Spalding High School does not tolerate bullying in any form.
- To establish appropriate rules, sanctions and anti-bullying strategies.
- To give a framework for reacting to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way.
- To give specific guidance on the handling of incidents of cyberbullying.

Definition of bullying:

'Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally'.

It includes:

- name-calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive or threatening comments,
- kicking, hitting, pushing, taking belongings,
- Cyberbullying – 'the sending or posting of harmful or cruel text messages or images, using the internet or other digital communication devices',
- producing offensive graffiti,
- excluding people from groups, spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.

There is no 'hierarchy' of bullying – all forms of bullying are taken equally seriously and dealt with firmly. 'Bullying – A Charter for Action' has been adopted by both the staff and students of Spalding High School.

Implementation of policy

We recognise that all members of staff are continuously involved in building and sustaining the ethos of the school and that common standards must prevail. The following points are of paramount importance at Spalding High School when we consider the subject of bullying.

- a) There is a clear understanding between the school community and parents that bullying behaviour of any kind is not acceptable and that it is considered a serious infringement of school policy.** Parents and school work together and students who are found to be displaying bullying behaviour are dealt with fairly, but firmly.
- b) All members of staff work as a team through a structured and well-understood pastoral system. Early detection of bullying is very important and good relationships between staff and students are fundamental in this.
- c) Students know whom to turn to for advice and help, if they find themselves or friends the victim(s) of a bully and they know that they will be taken seriously and that it will be followed up. This is done by raising awareness through classroom interactions, assemblies, PHSEE, student planner information, posters in form rooms. It has been the subject of a whole-school review through the School Council and a CD-Rom 'Know-It-All' has been distributed to all parents. Sixth form mentors are available every lunchtime for students to go to talk to.
- d) Students are given the opportunity to understand and to continue to develop their understanding of bullying behaviour, and why certain people tend to be bullies. Discussing/role playing behaviour strategies on how to cope in various circumstances where bullying might occur. This work is covered in Years 7 - 11 in their PHSEE lessons.
- e) A well-organised and structured staff duty system is in operation at lunch and break times, supported by senior staff. All areas of the school, both inside the building and outside are regularly visited at break and lunchtimes, especially where potential bullying might occur.

Reporting of incidents

There are a variety of ways in which a student is able to report an incident of bullying.

- By talking directly to any member of staff;
- by reporting it to a student mentor;
- by using the confidential 'Tell us about it' box at reception;
- by communicating through the dedicated e-mail/text service, set up at the request of the School Council.

Parents are also encouraged to alert pastoral staff to worries or concerns they may have.

When a bullying incident is reported, staff (or student mentors, after training and according to a clear set of guidelines) will act upon the report:

- giving reassurance that the person has done the right thing by telling someone
- listening to the views of all sides involved, and taking a written record of events
- informing relevant form tutors and/or year heads (who will contact parents)
- taking steps to try to ensure that the bullying stops
- imposing sanctions against the bully/ies where appropriate
- taking steps to change the bully/ies attitude and behaviour, as well as ensuring access to any support that is required
- providing support for the victim and monitoring the situation over the following weeks.

Cyberbullying incidents

All of the above information refers equally to incidents of cyberbullying. However, there are key steps to take in addition when dealing with this form of bullying. It may consist of inappropriate text-messaging, instant messaging and e-mailing; recording of offensive or degrading images and posting them on to social networking sites; receiving offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet; setting up of websites dedicated to be hurtful to individuals. It can be a very serious matter and can constitute a criminal offence; resulting in exclusion from the school.

Supporting the pupil being cyberbullied:

- ensure the pupil knows not to retaliate or return the message
- by helping or encouraging the pupil to save relevant evidence eg. By not deleting the message, by taking screen capture shots and noting web addresses. Network Manager can help with this.
- by checking they understand how to stop it happening again, eg. changing contact details, blocking contacts or leaving a chatroom.
- if it is known who is responsible, by taking steps to ensure that they remove the content. Senior management or senior pastoral staff will be involved and students will be asked to reveal a message or content on their phone to establish if bullying has occurred. Disciplinary measures will be taken against students who refuse to comply.
- by contacting the networking site or provider and making a report to get the content taken down and the user blocked
- in cases of threats or illegal content, the Police will be contacted and they will decide what needs to be kept for evidential purposes.
- Work in conjunction with parents/carers

Posters and information are displayed in classrooms, advice on net-safety is given in ICT lessons.

The school's acceptable use policy (rules which students have to follow to use ICT in school) is issued to all students annually and is reinforced in ICT lessons.

Mobile phones are allowed in school, but they must be switched off between 8.55am and 3.45pm and locked away in lockers. Phones will be confiscated for a period of 24 hours if found to be switched on, or in use.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 empowers all members of school staff to impose disciplinary penalties for inappropriate behaviour. It also empowers headteachers, to such an extent as is reasonable, to regulate the behaviour of pupils when they are off the school site and not under lawful control or charge of a school staff member (this is particularly pertinent to regulating cyberbullying).