

# Anti-Bullying Policy

## - Years 1 - 13

## Pastoral Policy 3

St Leonards emphasises a caring community with everyone sharing the responsibility to care for each other.

Everyone has a right to learn, and to live, in an atmosphere that is free from victimisation and fear. All members of the community must play their part in creating this secure environment.

We recognise that bullying can occur, and in many cases it happens in a subtle way. This policy has been created utilising the “Respect Me” framework and approach; developed by Anti-Bullying Scotland. [respectme.org.uk](http://respectme.org.uk)

**Bullying behaviour is wrong and the situation will be appropriately dealt with as detailed in this policy.**

### 1. We aim

- to maintain and develop a secure and welcoming school community where effective learning can take place;
- to clearly raise awareness in the School community of the nature and effect of bullying behaviour, and to reinforce a clear understanding of right and wrong.
- to promote a shared responsibility to care for each other, where the well-being of students is paramount.
- to ensure that pupils and parents know that the School will take positive action;
- to give each student self-discipline and a sense of responsibility – thus helping us all to work together as a community;
- to respect each student’s individuality and value;
- to create an environment where there are positive attitudes and relationships and a good working atmosphere, through tolerance, co-operation, courtesy and consideration;

**Our overall aim is a successful outcome and the prevention of further bullying.**

### 2. What is bullying?

Bullying is both behaviour and impact; what someone does and the impact it has on a person’s capacity to feel in control of themselves. We call this their sense of ‘agency’. Any form of bullying is unacceptable, as it undermines our aim of creating and sustaining a happy environment.

Bullying behaviour can harm people physically or emotionally and, although the actual behaviour might not be repeated, the threat that it might be sustained over time, typically by actions: looks, messages, confrontations, physical interventions, or the fear of these. This behaviour can include:

- Being called names, teased, put down or threatened face to face and/or online
- Being hit, tripped, pushed or kicked
- Having belongings taken or damaged
- Being ignored, left out or having rumours spread about you (face to face and/or online)
- Sending abusive messages, pictures or images on social media, online gaming platforms or phone
- Behaviour which makes people feel like they are not in control of themselves or their lives
- Being targeted because of who you are or who you are perceived to be (face to face and/or online)

Some common features which often appear in bullying are.

- It is deliberate, or thoughtless, hurtful or unkind behaviour
- It can be aggressive and violent, it can be subtle and pernicious.
- It is persistent
- It is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves

The school is aware of and takes very seriously any cyber-bullying involving the misuse of mobile phones / internet and will take appropriate action if such behaviour is observed or reported.

### **3. Anyone can bully**

- One is always responsible for one's own actions; we all have the potential to be a bully.
- There is no justification for bullying: it is up to a student/pupil to treat others with respect.
- No-one should expect to get away with aggressive behaviour!

**If a student/pupil feels unhappy about anything, we need her/him to ask for help and we can then support as is needed. We shall also act on corroborated third-party observations.**

### **4. Education**

The topic of 'Bullying' appears regularly in Ad Vitam and PSHE programmes. It is also discussed at weekly leadership meetings, House Meetings and by Tutors in Tutor Group meetings. Assemblies are used as an opportunity for the Head and Heads of Year to raise issues about friendships, unkind actions and unacceptable behaviour between students/pupils.

### **5. Procedure for students/pupils**

There are people who can help you with any problem you encounter.

A student/pupil who is being bullied, or knows of another student/pupil who is being bullied should speak up without delay.

A student/pupil should tell his/her Tutor, Head of Year, Housemaster/mistress or anyone else they feel they can approach and trust.

A counsellor can be sourced if a pupil would prefer to speak with someone “outside” of school.

**It is the responsibility of every member of our community to look after each other. Every complaint of bullying will be taken seriously.**

- Members of staff will deal with the complaint correctly and effectively in accordance with the training they have received and the age and stage of the children involved
- There is a solution to nearly every problem of bullying
- A student/pupil who complains will receive support and advice and in many cases the problem can be dealt with on a “no-names” basis.
- The primary aim will be for the bullying behaviour to cease, not the punishment of an individual or groups, unless necessary.
- Where possible, the views of the individual being subjected to bullying behaviours will be taken into account in the schools response.
- Where action has been taken to speak with a pupil regarding bullying behaviour, parents will be informed.

## **6 Vigilance and Staff Awareness**

Members of staff are vigilant at all times.

Appropriate staff are made aware of all aspects of care to ensure that they have the necessary professional skills especially awareness of the risk and indications of child abuse and bullying and how to deal with cases.

## **7 Procedures for Staff if bullying is reported to them or observed by them**

All reported or observed incidents of bullying behaviour or alleged bullying behaviour should be brought to the attention of the appropriate Year-Head / Housemaster / mistress who will always inform the Deputy Head (wellbeing) and put in motion the steps outlined below.

As quickly as possible, the following procedure will **normally** take place:

- The complainant’s Tutor, Head of Year or Housemaster/mistress, will see the complainant and any witnesses to gather as much perspective as possible.
- They will determine the nature of the incident.
- They will decide the way forward, in conjunction with the Deputy Head (wellbeing) if needed, and determine how serious the case is. In serious cases, they will also decide who may need to be informed / contacted. At this

stage other agencies may have to be involved such as the Police or the Social Work Department.

### **Gathering Perspective -**

1. Tutor, Head of Year, and Housemaster/mistress, if appropriate, will try to establish the facts. In any conversation regarding bullying, notes will be taken by the staff members and a second staff member will be in attendance to support the pupil. Where appropriate, we will ask for written statements from the students involved, together with details of any witnesses.

Facts required will be:

- What has happened
  - Who was involved
  - Who saw what happened
  - How often has this happened
  - Where it happened
  - Any action which has been taken already
  - In the case of cyberbullying aspects of the school's ICT Acceptable Use Policy may be invoked to secure relevant information.
2. Once the facts have been gathered, the relevant staff will speak with the Deputy Head (wellbeing) or the Senior Deputy Head and decide if any school consequences are required, specifically; detentions, periods of reflection or suspensions from school.
  3. Where possible, they will contact families of all parties spoken to on the day of the discussions.
  4. Where appropriate, a restorative conversation will take place, led by either a tutor, Head of Year and/or Housemaster/mistress to attempt to resolve the problem in a group situation. The Deputy Head (wellbeing) may join this too.
  5. If the bullying behaviour persists the Deputy Head (wellbeing) or Senior Deputy Head, who will have been kept informed at all stages, will talk with the students involved. Should this not resolve the matter, pupils may face expulsion.
  6. Tutors, Heads of Year and Housemaster/mistresses may also be asked to contact parents so that the situation can be carefully monitored. The Head will be kept informed and may intervene if he considers this to be necessary.
  7. The victim of bullying behaviour needs support and strategies to help challenge the behaviour without using threats and violence. The Ad Vitam leaders ( in most instances this is the Heads of Year ) play a large role in this, tailoring the programme to specific areas of need in a year group.
  8. The perpetrator of the bullying behaviour also needs support to help curb the bullying behaviour. Tutors, Heads of Year, Housemaster/mistresses have an important part to play in supporting a student who is bullying others. The student may be unaware of the effect of his/her actions or may be

experiencing difficulties which may manifest themselves in aggressive behaviour. Corrective / restorative measures can be talked through with an individual.

9. In the case of cyber-bullying the relevant aspects of the School's ICT Acceptable Use Policy may be invoked.

Positive behaviour can often be encouraged with a word of warning and /or discussion. In serious and / or persistent cases, a short period of suspension may be appropriate and in extreme cases the parents may be asked to remove their child from the school.

**Our aim is a successful outcome and the prevention of further bullying**

## **8. Meetings**

Bullying behaviour is regularly discussed in meetings between

- Members of the Senior Management Team
- Senior Management and senior pupils
- Pastoral Staff Meetings
- Heads of Year
- Tutors and students in their tutor groups

The result of these meetings is the feed-back of information about friendship patterns, particular incidents, any student who seems to be isolated, any growing power-base and any known conflict between a member of staff and a student, or between students.

## **9. Record Keeping**

Tutors, Heads of Year, Housemaster/mistresses and Deputy Head (wellbeing) maintain records of the welfare and development of individual students.

## **10. What parents can do**

If you are concerned about your son or daughter you should talk in confidence to your child's Head of Year or Housemaster / mistress. Parents will be contacted by the Head of Year within three working days, most likely much sooner.

11. **Monitoring.** Every report of bullying will be logged.

## **12. Monitoring the Policy: practice and review**

We recognise that each student and each situation will differ. We reserve the right, therefore, to alter our practice to suit each individual case. The Policy on Bullying will be monitored and reviewed by the Senior Management Team at appropriate intervals.