



SYON MANOR
COLLEGE

Antibullying Policy

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1.0 STATEMENT

This policy applies to all students and staff at Syon Manor College (SMC) irrespective of their age and whether a student is in the care of the College when bullying behaviour occurs. While this policy focuses mainly on the bullying of students by other students, it is recognised that other forms of bullying may occur, this is addressed in Section 10.

The College maintains a zero-tolerance approach to any form of bullying, whether online and/or in person, including sexual harassment and violence, racist, sexist and homophobic (or any other trans-related phobias) behaviour and abuse. Students and staff are encouraged to report any concerns or issues, however small, to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) so that appropriate and timely action can be taken, and relevant support offered.

This policy is available to staff on induction and in training.

2.0 AIMS

Through the operation of this policy, we aim:

- To promote and drive a positive and supportive culture among all students and staff throughout the College.
- To ensure students and staff are aware that any form or level of bullying will not be tolerated and that all concerns and allegations will be investigated.
- To ensure students and staff know what constitutes bullying, the disciplinary measures in place to deal with it and how to report concerns and/or abuse.
- To create an environment where students and staff feel confident to report concerns and/or abuse knowing they will be taken seriously, supported and that appropriate action will be taken.

3.0 BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Through the operation of this policy, we aim:

- To promote and drive a positive and supportive culture among all students and staff throughout the College.
- To ensure students and staff are aware that any form or level of bullying will not be tolerated.
- To ensure students and staff know what constitutes bullying, the disciplinary measures in place to deal with it and how to report concerns and/or abuse.
- To create an environment where students and staff feel confident to report concerns and/or abuse knowing they will be taken seriously, supported and that appropriate action will be taken.

4.0 RELATED POLICIES

This policy is to be read accordance with:

- SMC Safeguarding Policy

- SMC E-Safety Policy
- SMC Web Filtering and Monitoring Policy
- SMC Equality and Diversity Policy
- SMC Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- SMC Positive Behaviour Management Policy
- SMC Social Media Policy
- Complaints Policy

5.0 DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, either repeated over time or on a one-off basis, that hurts another individual or group either physically and/or psychologically. Bullying typically involves an imbalance of power where the victim is made to feel powerless, worthless, excluded or marginalised, and unable to defend themselves. Bullying may also include inciting others to take part in bullying behaviour.

Bullying is often connected to prejudices around belonging, identity and equality in the wider society, as well as perceived membership or association with a certain group or identity. For example, prejudices may target disabilities and special educational needs, ethnicity, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender, home life, (e.g. in relation to issues of care, parental occupation, poverty and social class) and sexual identity (homosexual, bisexual, transsexual).

Bullying can take place anywhere on and off the College premises, as well as online (cyberbullying), and may take many forms:

- **Physical:** Hitting, kicking, punching, pushing people around, spitting, initiation rituals; or taking, damaging or hiding possessions often with threat of violence and intimidation.
- **Verbal:** Name-calling, taunting, teasing, insulting, negative criticism, spreading rumours, ridiculing, using language that is racist, sexist or otherwise discriminatory, threats.
- **Psychological:** Isolating or excluding from social groups and friends; malicious accusations and spreading rumours, extortion, deliberate unkindness.
- **Sexual:** Harassment (unwanted sexual conduct including comments, touching, exposure to sexual imagery, coercion), sexual jokes and taunts, non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude imagery, upskirting, downflowing and sexual violence; sexual bullying, and sexual violence. This type of bullying is dealt with extensively in the College's Safeguarding Policy.
- **Cyberbullying (online):** Use of any digital media, such as mobile phones, instant messaging, email, chat rooms or social networking sites, to carry out bullying behaviour as described above; see below regarding cyberbullying as a criminal behaviour.

6.0 BULLYING AND CRIMINAL OFFENCES

6.1 Cyberbullying (online)

The Malicious Communications Act 1988, section 1, criminalises cyberbullying where 'electronic communications are indecent or grossly offensive, convey a threat or false information or demonstrate that there is an intention to cause distress or anxiety to the victim'. It also includes, (section 127) 'electronic communications which are grossly offensive or indecent, obscene or menacing, or false,

used again for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety to another could also be deemed to be criminal behaviour.'

Cyberbullying that involves taking and distributing indecent images of young people under the age of 18 falls under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. This includes non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos.

6.2 Physical and/or sexual violence, harassment and assault, theft and wilful damage of property.

Behaviour of this nature, and the threat of this behaviour, may constitute a criminal offence and/or civil wrong (tort) for which there can be legal punishment beyond the remit of the College. All allegations relating to such will be dealt with by the DSL or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) in accordance with SMC's Safeguarding Policy and in consultation with Children's Social Care (CSC) and/or the police.

7.0 RECOGNISING BULLYING

Anyone may become a victim of bullying. There are a range of factors, characteristics and social dynamics that may make someone vulnerable to bullying behaviour, often based on 'so-called' difference to the 'norm'. These include age, physical appearance, nationality, race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion and culture. Other factors may include being new to the College, shy, lacking in self-esteem and confidence. Someone may also be a target simply because of an irrational decision by a bully.

Signs that someone is being bullied may include:

- Frequently feeling unwell, missing lessons, leaving early and avoiding parts of the College.
- Dramatic changes in friend groups or seeming isolated.
- Suddenly becoming withdrawn, anxious and lacking in confidence.
- Unusually reluctant to participate in class or engage in group work.
- Becoming disengaged with their studies and noticeable change in their academic performance.
- Uncharacteristic aggressive or disruptive behaviour.
- Physical injuries such as unexplained cuts, bruises and rips in clothing and equipment.
- Belongings getting 'lost' or damaged.
- Asking to borrow money or stealing (to pay a bully).
- Problems with eating and sleeping.
- Bullying others.
- Self-harm and suicide attempts.

Staff at SMC need to be alert to the signs of bullying and be aware that some students may be reluctant to report bullying for a variety of reasons.

7.1 Why bullying may go unreported

There are many reasons why someone who has suffered bullying may be reluctant to report it, for example:

- They fear they will not be believed because the alleged bully is popular; and that reporting will make them less popular.
- They believe the things the bully is saying and doing are too embarrassing to discuss.
- They blame themselves for being bullied.

- They believe there is nothing anyone else can do.
- They are concerned their parents will find out and think less of them.
- They think they should try and toughen up and grow a thicker skin.
- They plan to avoid contact in order to not deal with the problem, thereby isolating themselves.

There are also reasons why someone who has witnessed or learned of bullying behaviour may not want to make a report. They may be concerned about reporting others and becoming unpopular; feel it is not their concern; fear being associated with the alleged victim.

Staff also need to be aware that students may not feel ready or know how to tell someone they are being bullied and may not know that what they are experiencing is in fact bullying.

8.0 ANTI-BULLYING CULTURE

8.1 Anti-bullying ethos

Our expectation of all members of the College community is that the welfare of students (and staff) is the College's primary concern. Bullying is a form of abuse which contravenes our Safeguarding Policy, Positive Behaviour Management Policy, Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy, Equality and Diversity Policy and the Staff Code of Conduct. Any complaint of bullying, including cyberbullying, will always be taken seriously and no form of bullying will be tolerated.

As a matter of safeguarding concern, all incidents of bullying must be referred to the DSL. The DSL may delegate handling of concerns to another member of staff who is able to offer the appropriate support but will continue to oversee the whole process.

As with all safeguarding concerns, the DSL will be responsible for dealing with both the alleged victim(s) and the alleged perpetrator(s) and developing ongoing programmes of monitoring and support as well as recording, on the College's secure internal safeguarding database (Sleuth), and reviewing all relevant notes, including interviews, witness statements and reports from professionals such as social workers or psychologists, as appropriate.

8.2 Equal opportunities and human rights

SMC's Equality and Diversity Policy provides full details of the College's commitment. This policy aims to protect any member of the college who may be deemed vulnerable with respect to a protected characteristic, in relation to bullying and other matters. The College is committed to a culture which provides equal opportunities and is free from bullying.

The Human Rights Act 1988 (HRA) sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that everyone in the UK is entitled to and contains Articles and protocols of the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) that are deemed to apply to the UK. Being subjected to bullying that may constitute harassment, violence and/or abuse, including of a sexual nature, may breach these rights.

8.3 Staff

Members of staff are expected to comply with the Safeguarding Policy. SMC ensures that all staff are fully briefed on current safeguarding issues including bullying, from induction upon joining the SMC community in training.

Staff are made aware of the importance of basic interviewing techniques should they be the first to know of a bullying incident through a meeting with the alleged victim(s); however, they are advised wherever possible to involve the DSL in the interview process from the outset.

Staff are aware of the importance of safeguarding and are trained to relay all concerns regarding safeguarding, including bullying, to the DSL in person or through the College's secure internal safeguarding database (Sleuth). They are also aware of their legal duty in extreme cases of bullying, where there is immediate risk of danger or harm to a student, to alert the local Children's Social Care (CSC) and/or the police. In all such circumstances the DSL must always be informed and the informing member of staff has a duty to follow up the concern to ensure that it is being dealt with.

8.4 Students

Students are expected to comply with the College's Positive Behaviour Management Policy, which outlines what constitutes positive behaviour and healthy relationships. Students are introduced to SMC's anti-bullying ethos, which promotes safeguarding and equal opportunities, when they have their first one-to-one meeting with their mentor. This is reinforced through ongoing PSHE programme.

Students are encouraged:

- To celebrate the effort and achievements of others.
- To hold and promote a positive attitude.
- To feel able to share problems with staff.
- To turn to someone, they trust if they have a problem.
- Not to feel guilty about airing complaints.

9.0 ANTI-BULLYING SYSTEMS

The anti-bullying systems are implemented and driven in the way described below.

9.1 Approach

The systems for detecting and dealing with bullying are designed to include all members of the SMC community – staff and students alike.

9.2 Vigilance

Members of staff are vigilant at all times but particularly:

- before lessons.
- at break times.
- during lessons.
- in the student common areas.

9.3 Meetings

Bullying is regularly discussed between:

- members of the Senior Leadership Team.
- teachers, support staff and students.
- Mentors and students.
- the DSL at Senior Leadership Team meetings
- staff, parents and guardians through communication with Mentors and other College staff.

The result of these meetings is to feedback 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.

9.4 Education

Measures are taken throughout each year to educate students about bullying and this policy. These measures include:

9.4.1 Personal Mentor sessions and PSHE

Anti-bullying, including online bullying, will be discussed with students in their sessions with their personal Mentors and through the PSHE curriculum.

9.4.2 Online safety

The DSL also provides advice regarding online safety, including when accessing online information when away from the College, for the whole SMC community – students, staff, parents and guardians.

9.5 Staff awareness

All staff take part in an induction and receive regular updates regarding their responsibilities in relation to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance, which includes anti-bullying. All staff are aware of the College's zero-tolerance approach to bullying and commitment to upholding equality and respect for all members of the SMC community.

9.6 Record keeping and monitoring

Every report of bullying must be entered on the college's secure internal safeguarding database, Sleuth, which is monitored and kept up to date by the DSL.

9.7 Culture

Bullying needs to be called out and dealt with swiftly so that all SMC members feel confident and safe in their learning environment. Students should know that:

- Every complaint of bullying will be taken seriously.
- Members of staff will deal with a complaint correctly and effectively in accordance with their experience and the training they have received.
- There is a solution to nearly every problem of bullying.
- A student 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 to cease, not the punishment of the bully unless this is necessary.

10.0 PROCEDURES

10.1 Reporting bullying

All reports of bullying will be taken seriously and those affected will be offered appropriate and timely support.

10.1.1 Students

A student who is being bullied, or who is worried about another student being bullied, should make a report without delay and can do so in several ways. The student may:

- Tell their parents, Mentor, DSL or another member of staff.
- Contact ChildLine (0800 1111).
- Contact the designated Child Protection Officer of the Local Social Services.
- Contact the police if the threat is severe.

10.1.1 Parents

Parents who are concerned that their young person is being bullied should inform their young person's personal Mentor or the DSL. Reports relating to staff will be handled in accordance with the College's Complaints Policy and Safeguarding Policy.

10.1.2 Staff concerns about students being bullied

If a member of staff is concerned about a student and/or if allegations about a student are made to staff, this must be reported to the DSL and will be handled in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy and/or the Positive Behaviour Management Policy.

10.1.3 Concerns about staff

This policy focuses mainly on the bullying of students by students although it is recognised that a staff member could be a victim and on occasion may be perceived to be guilty of bullying. All concerns about staff behaviour should be reported to the Head of College, DSL, or the LADO where relevant, and handled in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy which deals with allegations against staff members.

10.1.3.1 Where staff are concerned for themselves

If staff are being bullied, they should report this to their line manager or the DSL if the report concerns the line manager.

10.2 Assessment

The DSL or Deputy DSL will investigate concerns and/or allegations by meeting with see the alleged victim(s) and (unless the case involves very serious risk of harm, threat of harm or criminal offences) any witnesses without delay, to form an initial assessment. The assessment will consider:

- The nature of the incident(s) – physical, verbal, psychological, sexual, cyberbullying.
- If it is a 'one-off' incident involving an individual or a group.
- If it is part of a pattern of behaviour by an individual or a group.
- Whether serious harm has been caused or risk of serious harm exists.
- The likely outcomes and next steps based on the nature and level of the concerns and/or allegations: e.g. mediation, counselling and/or disciplinary action.

10.3 Serious harm, risk of harm and repeated misconduct

If the DSL believes the reported incident to raises serious issues of harm, possible criminal behaviour and/or repeated misconduct, it will become a disciplinary matter that will be dealt with in accordance with the College's Positive Behaviour Management Policy and/or Safeguarding Policy.

10.4 Criminal behaviour including violence and/or harmful sexual behaviour

Allegations that highlight violence and/or harmful sexual behaviour will automatically be considered as a safeguarding concern and will be dealt with in accordance with SMC's Safeguarding Policy and in consultation with external agencies.

10.5 Monitoring

As soon as a concern and/or allegation is raised about bullying the details will be entered on to the College's internal safeguarding database (Sleuth), where it will be tracked and monitored by the DSL. This may involve sharing information with colleagues and students, setting up counselling and support and reviewing outcomes.

10.6 Formal complaint

If the alleged victim or their parents/guardians are not satisfied with the action taken, they should be advised to make a formal complaint, according to the complaints procedure outlined in the College's Complaints Policy.