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SLT Reviewer (initials):	RN
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# STOVER SCHOOL

## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

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**Independent Day and Boarding School for Girls and Boys 3 – 18 Yrs**

June 2008  
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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This policy applies to all pupils whilst in the care of Stover School, to include provision before and after school, trips and activities and the Boarding provision. The principles of the policy also apply to all adult members of the Stover School community. The school will reflect the DfE guidance on preventing and tackling bullying – advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies, July 2017, Online bullying – advice for headteachers and school staff November 2014, Searching, Screening and Confiscation Advice for School, July 2022.

The policy should be read in conjunction with the Acceptable Use policy, Behaviour policy, Equal Opportunities policy (which covers the duties of the Equalities Act 2010) and the school Safeguarding policy.

All of the Stover community have a duty to report any incidence of bullying and all staff, volunteers and governors should be professionally curious with regards to bullying.

## **2. STATEMENT OF INTENT**

At Stover School, our community is based upon mutual respect, tolerance and understanding. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment or child-on-child abuse, so that every one of our pupils can develop their full potential. We endeavour to protect each pupil from any form of abuse, whether from an adult or a peer, including consensual or non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, gender-based issues and cyberbullying/online abuse, prejudice based and discriminatory bullying.

We expect all members of the Stover community to treat each other with courtesy and be co-operative, so that all can enjoy and learn in a respectful, caring, positive and constructive atmosphere.

Stover School prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Ours is a diverse community, with pupils from a variety of protected characteristics. Some pupils require additional support and help. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting Stover School in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and our pupil's families have a clear understanding of the school's zero-tolerance towards bullying and that they co-operate closely together. Acceptance of this policy forms part of our standard terms and conditions.

Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our pupils and community members fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the school. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable. Where necessary, we will apply the sanctions described in our Behaviour Policy for behaviour that constitutes bullying or harassment of any kind.

Where possible the pupils of Stover School are encouraged to create and add to the existing anti-bullying policy. Our experience shows that the ethos of and respect for the school is enhanced by listening to our pupils and by encouraging constructive suggestions from them. To facilitate this pupil committees exist at all levels of the school, which report into the Senior Leadership Team and other opportunities are provided through class and form groups.

### **Stover School's Anti Bullying Mission Statement – our aims and objectives**

Stover School does not tolerate any form of bullying. The following Statement is posted in all classrooms.

- Everyone has a right to live and work at Stover School without fear.
- The Stover School community aims to provide an environment in which all of its members are happy and safe.
- Stover School celebrates individual difference and aims to develop the talents and abilities of all individuals in a supportive fashion.
- Stover School aims to create an atmosphere of tolerance, cooperation and mutual respect in which bullying is seen as unacceptable. All members of the school will look to protect each other against incidents of bullying.
- All members of Stover School recognise that some individuals are more vulnerable to abuse or bullying and will be vigilant in respect of the support and protection of these individuals.
- Stover School aims to deal with incidents of bullying appropriately and swiftly.
- All members of the Stover community have a duty to respond, reassure and report incidents of bullying immediately.
- Staff in boarding are mindful of the role that they play in acting as both a staff member and as a parent. They recognise the unique nature of boarding and the increased potential for bullying.

### **3. DEFINITION OF BULLYING**

At Stover School bullying is defined as the repeating of actions over a period of time which intend to hurt, harm or humiliate another person or group. It is often, though not always, motivated by prejudice against a particular person or group on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational need or disability, family circumstance or physical attributes. Bullying could involve physical acts (including sexual) intimidation, verbal comments, online technology (including social media sites, chat rooms, emails, photographs and texts and other social media messages) and emotional means (by excluding or isolating, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. Bullying is often hidden and subtle or it can be overt and intimidatory.

Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time. It can cause serious and lasting psychological damage and even suicide.

Harassment and threatening behaviour are criminal offences. We always treat bullying seriously and we will respond appropriately. Any bullying instance, be it unsubstantiated, substantiated or low-level will be logged in the bullying log as part of the behaviour log.

#### **4 SIGNS OF BULLYING**

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to return to school and increased absences
- 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 spoiled by others
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing or that are damaged
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary, dressing differently)
- Psychological damage and diminished levels of self confidence
- Frequent visits to the Medical Centre with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches
- 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

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers.

#### **5 PREVENTATIVE MEASURES**

We take the following preventative measures:

- We use appropriate Assemblies to explain the school policy on bullying. Our PSHE programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the school. The programme is structured to enforce the message about community involvement and taking care of each other. It specifically tells pupils whom they should inform if they are being bullied, or are worried that another pupil is being bullied.
- Other areas of the curriculum highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable and by developing social skills.

- All our pupils are encouraged to tell a member of the teaching or pastoral staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place. Every member of staff is trained on how to respond to such allegations as part of their induction training.
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents.
- We have a strong and experienced pastoral team of Class Teachers, Specialist Teachers, Classroom Assistants, Form Tutors, House Leaders, Heads of Year and House Staff who support the Pastoral Senior Teacher and Assistant Head (Pastoral), Deputy Head and the Head of the Preparatory School and are trained and are alert to possible signs of bullying.
- Our pastoral team gives support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both victims and bullies.
- Our trained School Counsellor and Medical Team are an important part of our pastoral support service, providing specialist skills of assessment and counselling. They are available to give confidential advice and counselling support to pupils who can refer themselves when they have social, medical, emotional or behavioural concerns. Members of the pastoral team may refer pupils directly.
- The School Chaplain will give support and guidance to pupils of all faiths who are able to refer themselves to her, perhaps at a time of family break-up, sickness or bereavement. The Chaplain will provide confidential advice and seek to encourage the development of tolerance, understanding and respect for others in a multi-faith community.
- Staff are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class and patrol the school site, particularly areas where bullying might occur. They are trained to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour.
- In boarding houses, the assistant House Parents support the House Parents, acting *in loco parentis*. The informal house environment is important in reinforcing a pupil's standards and values, providing the opportunity for friendly, informal discussion of matters of concern to the individual pupil outside the formal classroom. We encourage close contact between the House Parent and parents/guardians, and would always make contact if we were worried about a pupil's well-being.
- Boarding staff are aware that those pupils that live in boarding do not have opportunity to remove themselves from the school environment, which means that they have no escape from potential bullying incidences. Any bullying incident will be reported to the Housemistress.
- Our Medical Centre and all our boarding houses display advice on where pupils can seek help, including details of confidential help lines and web sites connecting to external specialists, such as Childline and the Children Commissioner's Help at Hand service.
- All pupils have access to a telephone helpline, enabling them to call for support in private.
- We operate a peer counselling scheme in the Senior School, whereby trained older pupils are encouraged to offer advice and support to younger pupils.
- In the Senior School we provide leadership training to our Head Boys/Girls and their team of prefects which specifically covers the importance of offering support and assistance to younger and to vulnerable pupils.
- We reserve the right to investigate incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips and that occur in the vicinity of the school, involving our pupils

- We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures.

## **6 ONLINE BULLYING**

Online bullying involves 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. It can involve e-mails and Social Networking Sites, mobile phones and other technological platforms.

In addition to the preventative measures described above, the School:

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its ICT Acceptable Use Policy. This is distributed annually to all pupils and parents, signed for and centrally monitored by the Head's PA.
- Has effective filters and monitoring systems in place that are regularly reviewed.
- May impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet, in line with the school Behaviour policy.
- Issues all pupils with their own personal school email address, which must be used when emailing a member of staff.
- Will follow the DfE guidance and the KCSIE online safety guidance on teaching online safety.
- Offers Pupil and Parent Training annually, delivered by a suitable external provider, for all pupils in Years 3 – 13 in age appropriate sessions.
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and online bullying in PSHE lessons.
- Provides regular updates on online safety to parents so that they have the skills to be able to be responsible regarding accessing online sites when at home, since most online abuse occurs at home and not at school.
- Will follow the DfE guidance on searching screening and confiscation, and staff may examine any data or files on an electronic device that has been confiscated when there is good reason to do so.
- Boarding staff will remove devices from Junior boarders (Year 9 and below) overnight and all boarders are expected to not use devices after lights out.
- Follows GDPR legislation on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe.
- Expects all pupils to adhere to the Stover School Acceptable Use policy, with regard to their use of all electronic devices.

## **7 PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH REPORTED BULLYING**

If an incident of bullying is reported, the following procedures are adopted:

- The member of staff to whom it was reported or who first discovers the situation, will control the situation, reassure and support the pupils involved.

- They will inform the Head of Year/Prep Leadership Team as soon as possible.
- The member of staff will calmly explain the range of disciplinary measures that are potentially involved.
- The victim will be interviewed and may write an account of events. Notes will be taken for Preparatory pupils.
- The accused, together with all others who were involved, will be interviewed individually and asked to write an immediate account of events if they are considered old enough to do so.
- Any further questioning of the victim or accused will take place in a sensitive manner.
- Appropriate actions will be taken and support for the victim and accused will be provided, including reminders about any further inappropriate actions such as revenge by either party and the distress that has been caused.
- The incident will be recorded on the bullying log within the behaviour log.
- The Form Tutor/Class Teacher and if appropriate the House Parent, will be informed. In very serious incidents, the Head or members of SLT will be informed.
- The parents/guardians of all parties should be informed by email and/or telephone where appropriate they will be invited by school to meet and discuss the matter. Their support should be sought. The meeting may be online or face to face.
- A plan, including disciplinary sanctions and pastoral support, should be agreed by the pupils, parents and the school.
- A meeting involving the pupils, with close staff supervision, may be agreed and may be helpful in developing a strategy for all concerned to close the episode.
- A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place.
- In very serious and persistent cases, and only after the SLT has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to the Social Services. However, it is the policy of Stover School to attempt to resolve such issues internally under the school's own disciplinary procedures, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely. In these instances, the school will adhere to the When to Call the Police: guidance for schools and colleges.
- Any bullying incident, unsubstantiated, substantiated or low level will be recorded in the bullying log as part of the behaviour log.

## **8 Procedures for dealing with bullying outside school hours during term time**

This guidance is for parents should an incident of bullying occur outside school hours but in term time.

- Incidents of bullying that take place outside of school hours should be dealt with in the first instance by parents.
- Parents should report the incident in writing to the Form Teacher who will then decide whether further action within school is necessary.
- An incident of bullying that take place outside of school during term time and continues within school will be dealt with by the appropriate members of staff in liaison with parents and pupils concerned.
- If the bullying involves an element of online-bullying the parents should collect the appropriate evidence by printing, photographing and screenshotting the offending



material. This can then be shared with the school if required. Parents are reminded to filter and monitor their children's online use as most online bullying incidents happen at home.

## **9 Procedures for dealing with bullying during holiday times**

This guidance is for parents should an incident of bullying occur during holiday time.

- Incidents of bullying that take place during the holiday period should be dealt with by parents.
- If necessary, the parent should inform the Form Teacher in writing of the incident that took place in the holiday.
- If the incident of bullying is continuing and not resolved by the parents, appropriate members of staff within school will deal with the incident in liaison with parents and pupils concerned once the school reopens.
- Additional information on dealing with bullying may be found on the following websites:

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

[www.beatbullying.org](http://www.beatbullying.org)

[www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

<https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>