



**CASTERTON  
SEDBERGH PREPARATORY  
SCHOOL**

| <b>COUNTER-BULLYING POLICY</b> |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Version                        | 2024.1  |
| Effective from                 | September 2024  |
| Extent of Policy               | Casterton, Sedbergh Prep School                             |
| Policy Owner                   | Prep Headmaster   |
| Governor                       | Designated Safeguarding Governor                            |
| Review by                      | June 2025   |
| Frequency of Audit             | Annual  |
| Circulation                    | Pupils, parents, staff and the Governors of Sedbergh School |
| Publication                    | Website   |

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |   |
|---|---|
| POLICY STATEMENT.....                       | 3 |
| <b>Scope</b> .....                          | 3 |
| <b>Policy Aims</b> .....                    | 3 |
| BULLYING BEHAVIOUR .....                    | 4 |
| <b>What is bullying?</b> .....              | 4 |
| <b>Signs of bullying</b> .....              | 4 |
| RESPONSIBILITY .....                        | 5 |
| LEGAL ASPECTS.....                          | 4 |
| COUNTER-BULLYING CULTURE.....               | 4 |
| <b>Ethos</b> .....                          | 4 |
| <b>Equal Opportunities</b> .....            | 5 |
| <b>Staff</b> .....                          | 6 |
| <b>Pupils</b> .....                         | 5 |
| COUNTER-BULLYING WEEK .....                 | 6 |
| COUNTER-BULLYING SYSTEMS.....               | 7 |
| <b>Approach</b> .....                       | 7 |
| <b>Complaints</b> .....                     | 7 |
| <b>Vigilance</b> .....                      | 8 |
| <b>Meetings</b> .....                       | 8 |
| <b>Record Keeping</b> .....                 | 8 |
| <b>Education</b> .....                      | 7 |
| PROCEDURES.....                             | 9 |
| <b>Reporting incidents: Victim</b> .....    | 9 |
| <b>Reporting incidents: Witnesses</b> ..... | 9 |
| <b>Initial Complaint</b> .....              | 8 |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>Assessment</b> .....                | 10 |
| <b>Confirmed bullying</b> .....        | 10 |
| <b>Child Protection Incident</b> ..... | 9  |
| <b>Monitoring</b> .....                | 11 |
| <b>Formal Complaint</b> .....          | 11 |
| STAFF AWARENESS.....                   | 11 |
| PUPIL RESPONSIBILITY.....              | 12 |
| PARENTS .....                          | 12 |
| EYFS CHILDREN .....                    | 12 |

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all pupils and staff at Casterton, Sedbergh Preparatory School (the ‘Prep School’) irrespective of their age and whether or not a pupil is in the care of the School when and if bullying behaviour occurs.

The Policy has regard to current DfE advice: Preventing and Tackling Bullying (July 2017) and Cyberbullying: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff (2014).

### **Policy Aims**

Through the operation of this policy we aim to:

- Maintain and drive a positive culture of kindness and consideration among all pupils and staff throughout the School.
- Protect all those concerned with bullying behaviour.
- Reduce bullying behaviour, detect it when it occurs, and deal with it in a consistent, constructive and fair manner.
- Make clear our procedures for dealing with bullying.

**Bullying behaviour** is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at the Prep School because:

- It is physiologically, psychologically or emotionally harmful to the person who is bullied, and to those who engage in bullying behaviour, and those who support them.
- It interferes with a pupil's right to learn, to be safe, and to be treated with respect; the central pillars of our approach to promoting good behaviour.
- It is contrary to all our aims and values, our internal culture and the reputation of the School.

## BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

### What is bullying?

Bullying is when one or more people intend to physically, emotionally or psychologically hurt or cause harm to a person who is in a weaker position than him/her/them, and so is less able to defend himself/herself. Bullying usually happens over a period of time, and consists of a series of different incidents. Incidents which are short-lived will still be dealt with seriously, but may not be considered as bullying. Bullying can be:

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Emotional        | being unfriendly, excluding, intimidating, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)  |
| Physical         | pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence   |
| Racist           | racial taunts, graffiti, gestures  |
| Sexual           | unwanted physical contact or inappropriate or abusive sexual comments or actions   |
| Disability       | disability-related taunts, graffiti, gestures  |
| SEN              | taunts, graffiti, gestures related to a person's educational needs   |
| Cultural         | taunts, graffiti, gestures related to a person's cultural background   |
| Religious        | taunts, graffiti, gestures related to a person's religious beliefs or background   |
| Familial         | taunts, graffiti, gestures related to a person's family circumstances  |
| Sexist           | comments or actions that focus on sex differences  |
| Homophobic       | because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality   |
| Verbal           | name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, threat of violence  |
| Electronic/Cyber | All areas of internet, such as email, social network & internet chat room misuse for the purpose of upsetting someone.<br>Bullying via text messaging & calls such as threatening or unfriendly texts or calls.<br>Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera & video facilities for the purpose of upsetting someone. |

### Signs of bullying

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

- 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
- Frequent visits to the Matron with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches etc
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- Choosing the company of adults
- Loss of appetite
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping, experiencing nightmares etc

- 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 further investigated by parents and teachers.

Serious and malign bullying can cause great distress to the person bullied and can lead to significant psychological damage. It may also lead to the application of laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.

## **RESPONSIBILITY**

It is *everyone's* responsibility to ensure, whatever the circumstances, that no person becomes a victim of bullying. All staff and pupils have a responsibility to report bullying when they understand it to have taken place.

Cyberbullying will be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) via the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) based at CSPS. The DDSL at CSPS is Nick Goligher, Senior Deputy Head.

## **LEGAL ASPECTS**

A person who makes a physical or sexual assault on another, or who steals or causes damage to the property of another, commits a criminal offence and also a civil wrong known as a "tort" for which there can be legal consequences outside the School.

## **COUNTER-BULLYING CULTURE**

### **Ethos**

Our expectation of all members of the School Community is that:

- The School has a total commitment to its Counter-Bullying Policy and Safeguarding Policy.
- Behavioural expectations are clear, well displayed and adhered to.
- A pupil or a member of staff who witnesses or hears of an incident of bullying will take immediate action in addressing it or report it to the Head of House or Headmaster.
- A complaint of bullying will always be taken seriously.
- No one will tolerate unkind actions or remarks or stand by when someone else is being bullied.

### **Equal Opportunities**

In School and in every year group:

- Discriminatory words and behaviour are treated as unacceptable.

- Positive attitudes are fostered towards people who are disabled and towards ethnic, cultural and linguistic groups within and outside the School.
- Positive attitudes are fostered towards both sexes through the curriculum, assemblies, chapel services and Form Periods.
- Staff recognise the increased risk that children with SEND or EAL will be both the victims and perpetrators of bullying.

## Staff

Through their training and experience, members of the staff are expected to promote a counter-bullying culture by:

- Demonstrating positive and caring behaviour.
- Treating pupils and each other with respect.
- Celebrating achievement.
- Anticipating problems and providing support.
- Disciplining sensibly and fairly.
- Providing opportunities to listen to pupils.
- Offering support and guidance where and when necessary.
- Acting as advocates of pupils.

## Pupils

Through our pastoral care systems, pupils are taught that bullying will not be tolerated in the School. They understand:

- Each Form will sign up to a Counter-Bullying Charter at the beginning of each academic year.
- To treat others as they would wish to be treated.
- To celebrate the effort and achievements of others.
- To hold and promote positive attitudes.
- To feel able to share problems with staff.
- To turn to anyone they trust if they have a problem.
- Not to feel guilty about airing complaints.

In addition, pupils are taught through form periods, PSHEE and assemblies 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 every problem of bullying.
- A 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 to cease, not the punishment of the bully unless necessary.

## **COUNTER-BULLYING WEEK**

During the national Anti-Bullying Week, held each November, the chapel and assemblies will reflect the theme proposed by the Anti-Bullying Alliance and pupils will have the opportunity to complete a Counter Bullying Questionnaire that will help inform the Prep School's approach to bullying.

## COUNTER-BULLYING SYSTEMS

### Approach

Our systems for detecting and dealing with bullying to or from pupils are designed to operate:

- Vertically - through all year groups.
- Horizontally - within year groups and in the classroom and other activities.

Our counter-bullying systems are implemented and driven in the way described below.

### Complaints

A pupil who is being bullied or who witnesses bullying should bring this to the attention of a member of staff without delay and can do so in several ways. These are displayed in Prep School classrooms and Boarding Houses.

- By informing his/her parents, his/her Form Tutor/Teacher, his/her Housemaster/Housemistress or House Matron, or the Chaplain, or any member of staff, or a responsible older pupil.
- By contacting the School Nurse.
- By contacting the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead (Dr Burns 07412 078745), the Senior School's Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Mr Colin Gunning [gun@sedberghschool.org](mailto:gun@sedberghschool.org)), the Prep School's Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Mr Nick Goligher [ng@sedberghprep.org](mailto:ng@sedberghprep.org)) or the Headmaster (Mr Will Newman [wrn@sedberghprep.org](mailto:wrn@sedberghprep.org)).
- By contacting the School's Independent Listener who currently is Rev Snow [rector@therainbowparish.org](mailto:rector@therainbowparish.org) or 015242 72044
- Cumbria Social Services - 01539 773367
- By telephoning Childline - 0800 1111
- Office of The Children's Commissioner – 020 7783 8330
- Kidscape – 020 7730 3300
- NSPCC Child Protection Helpline - 0808 800 5000
- OFSTED - 0300 123 4666
- [concerns@isi.net](mailto:concerns@isi.net) – 0207 600 0100

## Vigilance

Members of staff are vigilant at all times but particularly:

- Before and between lessons
- Playtimes and in the changing rooms/cloakrooms/boot room
- In Houses, particularly in dormitories
- On school transport
- At dining tables

## Meetings

Bullying can be raised and is regularly discussed in meetings between:

- Members of the Senior Management Team
- Housemaster/Housemistress and Headmaster
- Staff meetings
- Boarding meetings
- Safeguarding meetings
- Tutors and pupils in their tutor group
- House staff and matrons

The outcome of these meetings is to feed back information about friendship patterns, particular incidents, any pupil who seems to be isolated, any growing "power base" and any known conflict between a member of staff and a pupil, or between pupils.

## Record Keeping

- The Housemaster/Housemistress and House Staff maintain records of the welfare and development of individual pupils.
- Behavioural patterns are tracked and monitored by Form Tutors via a pupil minus table and merit table in iSAMS. Any significant patterns or areas of concern are discussed with the Head of House or Headmaster.
- Staff members will record bullying incidents on the child's iSAMS record. In the case of bullying, this will be recorded as Serious Misbehaviour on Reward and Conduct (perpetrator) and as a Level 2 concern in Wellbeing Manager (both victim and perpetrator).
- The Houseparents will also record any behavioural minuses on iSAMS.
- Each term, the SMT will collate and analyse patterns of bullying as they update the register of serious misbehaviour. Any patterns identified are addressed by the SMT through the relevant staff, policies and/or procedures.

## Education

The PSHE curriculum includes lessons on bullying which cover:

- Who is the "bully"? Who is the "victim"?
- Why are some people "bullies" and others "victims"?
- What should a pupil do if s/he is bullied?

- What constitutes bullying? Where are the boundaries?
- What should be done if bullying is confirmed?
- Assemblies about counter-bullying take place in November each year, during Anti-Bullying week.
- Posters promoting awareness of counter-bullying are displayed around School.

## PROCEDURES

### Reporting incidents: Victim

There are many reasons why a person who has suffered bullying may be reluctant to report it. S/he may become demoralised and may say, for example:

'It is telling tales. They won't believe me because the person I am complaining about is intelligent and popular and I am not, and I will become even more unpopular'.

'The things they are saying and doing are too embarrassing to discuss with an adult'.

'It is all my fault anyway for being overweight/ answering all the questions in class'.

'There are too many of them; there is nothing the staff can do'.

'It will get back to my parents and they will think less of me'.

'I will just try and toughen up and grow a thicker skin'.

'I will lie low and not audition for a part in the school play etc'.

'It will only get worse!'.

*The culture of the school is to breakdown these perceptions and Form Tutors will ensure that all pupils know how to report concerns directly to any member of staff or via a concerns box.*

### Reporting incidents: Witnesses

There are also reasons why a person who has witnessed or learned of bullying behaviour may not want to make a report. S/he may say:

'It is "grassing" and I will become unpopular'.

'It is not my concern anyway'.

'I don't rate the victim and I would find it embarrassing to be associated with him/her'.

*Again, Form Tutors will make clear that it is wrong to see and not report bullying. This is held within the Counter-Bullying Charter.*

### Initial Complaint

A person in authority who learns of alleged bullying behaviour should:

- Firstly, offer advice, support and reassurance to the alleged victim.
- Enter the bullying incident onto iSAMS in both the Reward and Conduct and Wellbeing Manager modules; this will automatically notify the Form Tutor, Head of Day House, Housemaster/Housemistress and Headmaster.

The Housemaster/Housemistress/Deputy Head/ Headmaster must:

- Discuss and agree on the action to be taken.
- Contact the Housemaster/Housemistress/members of staff in the Prep School to inform them of the action to be taken, and on who will take responsibility for monitoring this.

## Assessment

The Deputy Head or Headmaster will normally see the complainant and (unless the case is very serious) any witnesses without delay and form an initial view of the allegation, viz:

- The nature of the incident/s - physical? verbal? exclusionary? etc.
- Is it a "one-off" incident involving an individual or a group?
- Has physical injury been caused? Who should be informed – Headmaster? Parents? The School's Safeguarding Officer? Social Services? The police?
- Can the alleged bully be seen on a no-names basis?
- What is the likely outcome if the complaint proves to be correct?

At this stage, the possible outcomes for an incident which is assessed include:

- There has been a misunderstanding which can be explained sympathetically to the alleged victim with advice to the alleged bully.
- The complaint is justified in whole or in part, and further action will be needed (see Range of Action, below).

## Confirmed bullying

When a bullying complaint is upheld the range of responses will include one or more of the following:

- Advice and support for the victim and, where appropriate, establishing a course of action to help the victim. This will include a 'checking in/out' with their Form Tutor at both ends of the day, until they feel safe.
- Advice and support to the perpetrator in trying to change his/her behaviour. This will include tutorials with the pastoral team (Form Tutor / Head of Day House / House Parent / Chaplain / SMT) aimed at re-education on the School's values: the Ways of the Wolf. There will also be clear instructions and a warning or final warning.
- A supervised meeting between the bully and the victim to discuss their differences and the ways in which they may be able to avoid future conflict. This must only happen if agreed by the victim.
- A disciplinary sanction against the bully ranging from a loss of privileges to temporary exclusion.
- Action to break up a "power base", such as moving either the bully or victim to another class / dormitory after consultation with the pupil, his/her parents and the relevant staff.
- In all cases, the parents of the victim and bully will be informed.

In a very serious case or a case of persistent bullying and after following the procedure as described in the Expulsion, Removal and Review Policy, a bully may be required to leave the School permanently.

## Peer-on-Peer Abuse: Child Protection Incident

Where there is reasonable cause to suggest that a child is suffering or likely to suffer considerable harm through bullying, the School will treat the issue as a child protection concern. The Prep School Headmaster must inform the Senior School Headmaster and the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead ("DSL").

The CSPS Headmaster/ DSL will:

- Interview the alleged victim, bully and any witnesses separately, in order to establish the facts of the case. They may choose to ask the CSPS Headmaster/ DSL to be present.
- Send a summary of their findings to the CSPS Headmaster/ DSL, Senior School Headmaster, relevant Housemaster/ Housemistress.
- The CSPS Headmaster will notify the parents of the victim and bully giving them details of the case and the action being taken.
- Treat both bully and victim as 'at risk', in the case of disclosures about peer-on-peer abuse.
- Involve outside agencies as appropriate.

## Monitoring

The situation should be monitored for as long as necessary thereafter. Weekly meetings will take place between the Deputy Head / Headmaster and the victim and bully to ensure that all is well. The outcome of these meetings would be communicated to the parents and recorded in the pupils' iSAMS under the Wellbeing Manager. Parents will be kept fully informed and involved in the ongoing support of their children.

Bullying trends and locations are monitored by the Senior Deputy Head on an ongoing basis and at least termly by the SMT. Any concerning patterns of behaviour or 'black spots' will be addressed appropriately.

## Formal Complaint

If the victim, bully or his/her parents are not satisfied with the action taken, they are advised to make a formal complaint, according to the procedure outlined in the Complaints Procedure.

## STAFF AWARENESS

Through INSET and staff meetings, all staff are trained to prevent bullying through:

- Awareness of the risk and indications of child abuse and bullying, and how to deal with cases

And in Houses ensuring that:

- There is an adequate presence of staff as outlined within the school duty rota.
- Staff are actively involved with pupils in all areas of the house when they are on duty.
- Attempts are made to avoid boredom and lack of purpose among pupils.
- There is space available for pupils' quiet withdrawal.
- There is no crowding in bedrooms or common rooms.

- Good behaviour and discipline is maintained.

## **PUPIL RESPONSIBILITY**

We emphasise with senior pupils (Years 7 and 8) the role which is expected of them in setting a good example and being helpful to younger pupils and each other. Older boarders are encouraged to keep an eye on younger boarders and offer support, where it is needed, and in particular:

- The responsibilities of senior pupils are appropriately limited.
- Members of staff expect senior pupils to offer supervisory support.
- House and school positions of responsibility receive training at the beginning of the academic year on how to care for younger pupils.

## **PARENTS**

Parents may help in the following ways:

- If your child tells you about bullying, talk with them about ways in which together you can tell the school how they are feeling and what has happened. At school we do not tolerate bullying. We will listen to them and do everything we can to remedy the situation.
- The first and most important step is to listen. Allow them to tell their story in their own words. Don't respond by dismissing their experience as part of 'growing up'.
- If your child refuses to talk to you, suggest that they talk to another adult, in their safety network or safety circle. Before they speak to their parents or teachers about being bullied, some children may phone Childline.
- If you suspect your child is being bullied or is feeling unhappy about something, please contact the Form Tutor, Assistant Head, their Head of Day House, Housemaster/ Housemistress or Headmaster, and do encourage your child to do likewise. It is important to 'tell' and talk about the problem.

## **EYFS CHILDREN**

Our youngest children are encouraged to behave towards each other with kindness and consideration. They have to learn to look after their own possessions and to respect the possessions of others. We expect them to be honest, helpful and polite, to work hard and to listen to others – in line with our School ethos. They should respect everyone and learn to value differences and diversity. Parents should raise concerns with Form Tutors in the first instance, which will be quickly addressed.

We explain to children why some forms of behaviour are unacceptable and can be hurtful to others. We rarely need to impose sanctions but sometimes we may have to take swift, reasonable and appropriate action to address behaviour which is deemed as inappropriate. Occasionally, and in extreme circumstances, a child may be sent to see the Senior Deputy Head, who will explain the inappropriateness of a particular action but such instances are extremely rare. Parents would be fully informed. In cases of repeated instances of unkind or inappropriate behaviour, parents will be

