

# ILFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

## Anti – Bullying Policy Summary Document



**Spring 2020**

Headteacher Signature:	Date: 6 <sup>th</sup> February 2020
Chair of Governors Signature	Date: 6 <sup>th</sup> February 2020

## Policy Summary

The aim of the policy is to prevent bullying of any kind and ensure that everyone can operate in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied. Everyone in the school community has a responsibility to report any incident of bullying that comes to their attention. Reports of bullying will always be taken seriously including those that happen outside of the school premises in circumstances such as journeys to and from school, external trips, after school clubs and cyber bullying. We expect our students to work to the best of their ability, in a cohesive manner, with complete focus in order to create a positive learning environment.

### Definition of Bullying

At ICHS we see bullying as: ***“Any deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, which intentionally hurts another student or group, either physically or emotionally; where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves and is often motivated by prejudice.”*** ICHS will not tolerate peer on peer abuse as ‘banter’ or ‘part of growing up’ and victims of peer abuse will be supported.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour include:

- Physical (including sexual) assault
- Verbal abuse – name calling; teasing or making offensive remarks
- Deliberate isolation of an individual leading to indirect emotional tormenting by exclusion from social groups or spreading malicious rumours
- Acts of extortion such as material blackmail or cheating in relation to money
- Pressing/Coercing a person to do something they do not wish to do
- Cyber bullying – using IT, Digital devices or electronic based resources inappropriately

Examples of unacceptable cyber behaviour include:

- Abusive comments, rumours, gossip and threats made using digital communications and/or technologies - this includes internet trolling
- Sharing pictures, videos or personal information without the consent of the owner and with the intent to cause harm or humiliation
- Hacking into someone's email, phone or online profiles to extract and share personal information, or to send hurtful content while posing as that person
- Creating dedicated websites that intend to harm, make fun of someone or spread malicious rumours
- Blackmailing or pressuring someone to do something they do not want to such as sending images, documents, copies of protected exam papers

Bullying may involve complicity that falls short of direct participation for instance, by manipulating a third party to tease or torment another person. It may be overt and intimidating, but is often hidden and subtle. It includes actions or comments which are racist, religious or cultural, homophobic, transphobic, sexist, sexual or may focus on disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape) or any reference to Special Educational Needs or disability. You are condoning bullying if you witness any of the above and do nothing (see the collective responsibility section in the Behaviour and Discipline Policy).

### What is NOT bullying?

- One-off incidents: Bullying is persistent and repetitive, and generally fits a pattern of behaviour. (There may be occasions when a one-off incident is so significant that it causes long term effects, and it is therefore categorised as bullying e.g. extreme public humiliation that deters someone from engaging in discussions or social events)
- Mutual conflict: A disagreement, argument or fight in which both parties have equally participated and where there is no imbalance of power.

### The signs of bullying

Changes in a student’s behaviour and body language cannot indicate for certain that bullying is happening. However, the following signs will certainly tell you that something may be wrong:

- Unexplained injuries
- Lost or broken possessions

- Low self-esteem
- A loss of friends
- Withdrawing from social situations
- Change in attitude or behaviour
- Difficulty sleeping or bed wetting
- Truancy or feigning sickness
- Declining grades and a lack of interest in school
- Self-destructive behaviour
- Refusal to talk about what is wrong

Bullying is among the top concerns that parents/carers and students have. It makes the victim's life miserable; undermines their confidence and self-esteem; destroys their sense of security and can be psychologically damaging. Bullying impacts on the victim's attendance and attainment at school and marginalises those groups who may be particular targets for bullies. It can have a lifelong negative impact on some young peoples' lives. At worst, bullying has been a factor in student suicide.

### **ICHS Procedures**

Students should report bullies and bullying activities to a responsible adult, this could be their Form Tutor, Head of House, a trusted teacher, a member of support staff or a senior leader. The way to stamp out bullying is for people to be aware of the issues involved and be clear in their own minds on the correct action to take.

### ***Individual approaches***

On an individual level, suspected victims of bullying should be approached discreetly and in an inconspicuous situation where suspicions will not be aroused in other students. Once engaged in a professionally discrete environment, the student should be told that staff suspect he is being bullied and that information is needed before action can be taken; The victim will be interviewed on his own by a Head of House or appropriate member of staff e.g. Form Tutor or a trusted adult and will be asked to write an immediate account of events. The process of dealing with bullying will be explained clearly to them. The victim will also be given the opportunity to discuss their own reactions and behaviour towards the bully. The victim will be asked to share any digital content (e.g. screenshots) that they possess in relation to the bullying incident. The victim will be given support, advice and an offer of counselling (if appropriate and after discussion with their parents). Counselling is dependent on specialist services being available.

The suspected perpetrator(s) of bullying will be interviewed on his/their own by a Head of House or appropriate member of staff e.g. Form Tutor or a trusted adult and will be asked to write an immediate account of events. The process of dealing with bullying will be explained clearly to them. The perpetrator(s) will be given the opportunity to discuss their own reactions and behaviour towards the victim. The perpetrator(s) is/are likely to have any digital devices searched (in-line with our Behaviour and Discipline Policy) in order to obtain any digital content (e.g. screenshots) that they possess in relation to the bullying incident. Once the appropriate member of staff or Head of House are clear that a bullying offence has been committed they will collate statements, digital evidence and complete an investigation summary form which will be reviewed by a senior member of staff before any sanctions are implemented.

### ***Group approaches***

General "bullying" issues can be discussed in form time or can be made the subject of PSHEE lessons or assemblies. This may result in further information being shared by students with staff. The use of the anti-bullying box for physical notes (located by the entrance to the main hall) and the [stopbullying@ichs.org.uk](mailto:stopbullying@ichs.org.uk) reporting system is to be encouraged for students in all year groups and will be publicised through house assemblies and displays. The victims of bullying themselves can choose to use this, or friends that are concerned of ongoing situations may choose to inform staff using this system as it provides anonymity.

### ***House/Year team approaches***

If it is suspected that bullying is a problem in a particular year or house group, we will hold a separate house or year group assembly. The assembly will be led by a senior member of staff and relevant Heads of House.

### **Involving parents**

#### ***Parental Support***

We recognise that parental support is a key to the success of anti-bullying initiatives. Therefore the school will:

- Regularly consult and communicate with parents
- Provide information about the nature and effects of bullying
- Advise parents of possible consequences of their child being involved in bullying
- Alert parents to suspicions of bullying if they arise

#### ***Parents reporting bullying***

The first point of contact for parents is likely to be the school office. The office will assess the concerns and contact the Form Tutor or Head of House. Should the issue be deemed as requiring an immediate response, in line with child protection procedures, a member of a senior staff will lead on any investigation. Parents may also use the [stopbullying@ichs.org.uk](mailto:stopbullying@ichs.org.uk) e-mail system to report concerns.

### **Consequences and sanctions**

Where students have been involved in bullying incidents, sanctions will be rigorously applied and we will expect parents to support the school in enforcing its rights and responsibilities when dealing with unacceptable behaviour. All homophobic and racist incidents will be permanently recorded on student files and will be added to our central records. Sanctions might include removal from the group (in class), withdrawal of break and lunchtime privileges, withholding participation in any school trip or sports events that are not an essential part of the curriculum, House detention, School (Senior Staff) detention, Inclusion, Temporary placement in another educational establishment (school, respite unit or pupil referral unit), Fixed period exclusion or Permanent exclusion. The following guidelines will be used when dealing with **persistent** bullying:

**An initial sanction will be delivered to the bully.** A copy of this sanction will be communicated via a telephone call or a letter to parents/carers and will be recorded on the student's school file. Any possible special educational needs of the bully will be assessed or reviewed at the next intervention group meeting and, if appropriate, provision will be made for additional support. Bullies will be made aware of the consequences of their behaviour for their future lives.

**Inclusion (Isolation)/exclusion from school for a period of time.** Parents/carers will be informed. A copy of this sanction will be communicated via a telephone call and a letter to parents/carers and will be recorded on the student's school file. At the end of inclusion (Isolation)/exclusion the student, accompanied by a parent/carer, will attend an interview with the Assistant Headteacher and the Head of House. The student will be placed on a red report for a 1 week period which will also include a final review meeting with the Assistant Headteacher. Any possible special educational needs of the bully will be assessed or reviewed at the next intervention group meeting and, if appropriate, provision will be made for additional support.

**Longer period of exclusion or permanent exclusion from school.** Parents/carers will be informed. A copy of this sanction will be communicated via a telephone call and a letter to parents/carers and will be recorded on the student's school file. If the student is re-admitted at the end of the exclusion the student, accompanied by a parent/carer, will attend an interview with the Assistant Headteacher and the Head of House. The student will be placed on a red report for a 2 week period which will also include both an interim and a final review meeting with the Assistant Headteacher. Any possible special educational needs of the bully will be assessed or reviewed at the next intervention group meeting and, if appropriate, provision will be made for additional support. If a bully serves a fixed term exclusion and then re-offends they **will be at serious risk of permanent exclusion**.

These are minimum sanctions and each incident will be judged on its own merits alongside a review of the perpetrators prior conduct. In very serious cases it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or Social Services; however it is the policy of the school to attempt to resolve such issues internally, using our own disciplinary sanctions, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal offence has been committed. Any bullying offence involving a crime (e.g. demands for money) will be reported to the Police. Where serious violence is involved, the Headteacher will normally permanently exclude the student. Any retaliation by a bully or person appointed by the bully against any other student whom the bully suspects of having provided information which has led to his punishment, will result in an immediate exclusion from school of the bully pending consideration of permanent exclusion.