

Anti-Bullying Policy



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1. Our Vision

The Spires College is a happy, harmonious learning community where staff and students feel safe and secure. College life is characterised by a calm, purposeful environment underpinned by relationships built upon mutual respect. Our expectation is that all students and staff will behave in appropriate and socially acceptable ways. This includes speaking up against behaviour that damages the community and reporting bullying when it is witnessed.

Every member of staff has a key role to play in promoting and sustaining the highest standards of behaviour for learning. We aim to provide a safe learning environment where everyone feels able to enjoy and achieve and fulfil their potential, free from bullying.

The well-being of every young person is of paramount importance; every learner has the right to a high-quality learning experience at The Spires College, free from harm, neglect and abuse. All staff have a duty of care and a responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the well-being of our students.

The College community shares the definition of bullying as "A persistent and deliberate attempt to hurt or humiliate someone." One-off incidents, whilst also very serious and always dealt with, do not fall within the definition of bullying.

There is a consistent approach to how bullying incidents are dealt with and parents or carers are involved at the earliest opportunity. Students are empowered to develop effective personal strategies to enhance their own resilience.

2. Types of Bullying

There are various types of bullying, but most have three things in common:

- ▲ It is deliberately hurtful behaviour;
- ▲ It is repeated over time;
- ▲ There is an imbalance of power, which makes it hard for those being bullied to defend themselves.

Bullying can take different forms and can be:

- ▲ Physical: e.g. hitting, kicking or taking belongings;
- ▲ Verbal; e.g. name calling, insulting or hurtful remarks;
- ▲ Indirect; e.g. spreading malicious rumours, excluding individuals from social groups or family feuds brought into school;
- ▲ Cyber: e.g. using mobile phones, tablets, other types of devices to send or share threatening or offensive messages or images.

3. Implications of Bullying

Bullying is always taken seriously because of the potential impact upon young people. Many of the outward signs of bullying can be the same as other indicators of abuse such as non-accidental injuries, self-harm, low self-esteem, unhappiness, fear, distress or anxiety.

- ▲ If bullying is unchecked, others may come to see bullying behaviour as acceptable within the College;
- ▲ Students who are bullied can become bullies of younger or more vulnerable students;
- ▲ Bullying can have long term effects on victims, which may stretch into their adult lives.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The Principal has ultimate responsibility for the well-being of all students and staff.

All staff, students, parents and governors must be aware of the policy and share responsibility for enforcing its principles. The line of communication starts with the Tutor followed by the respective Pastoral Support Manager, Head of Year, Vice Principal for Quality Partnerships and the Principal.

5. Dealing with Bullying

The College takes a proactive stance to raise awareness about bullying. This is done through a range of strategies including assemblies, the Fortnightly Focus tutorial programme, SMSC and PSHE lessons and a high staff presence and visibility during lesson change-over, break, lunch time and before and after school.

Minor incidents or disagreements should be addressed by form tutors or subject teachers in the first instance. However, any suspicions or allegations of bullying must always be reported to a trusted adult and passed on to the appropriate Pastoral Support Manager or Head of Year as soon as possible.

The Head of Year will investigate the concern or allegation to clarify the facts through a thorough investigation, taking statements from the alleged bully, victims and witnesses.

Careful consideration of all circumstances will be made before sanctions or next actions are decided. This will, in the vast majority of cases, involve the parents or carers of both the alleged bully and the victim being informed at the earliest opportunity. An incident report will be created in SIMs.

Each individual case will be recorded and investigated by the appropriate member of staff. Students are encouraged not to remain silent in cases of bullying but to be explicit regarding allegations and seek the support of their friends and witnesses if appropriate. Sanctions will be applied to the perpetrator, potentially including isolation, exclusion, intervention and support. The victim will receive support through our pastoral network which includes Tutors, Pastoral Support Managers, Heads of Year, College Counsellor, Designated Safeguarding Lead and other agencies if required.

A range of approaches will be used to support the bullied and help them build resilience and, in addition, a range of approaches to help those who bully to understand the suffering and anxiety caused by their actions:

- ▲ Staff could offer coaching and problem solving strategies to enable the bullied to tackle what has happened; this builds resilience and confidence, nurturing lifelong learning in resolving problems. This approach is suitable for lower level problems and where the bullied wants to regain some control;
- ▲ The member of staff may work alongside the bullied to resolve the problems actively through a restorative model; this will involve problem-solving meetings facilitated by a member of staff;
- ▲ In serious incidents, such as safeguarding, violence, threat of weapons, or sustained serious bullying, a member of the Senior Leadership Team will take over and deal with the issue;
- ▲ The bully should receive support and help so that they can understand the harm caused by their actions.

Students have the responsibility to ensure that students who are bullied are not isolated and to intervene when someone is being bullied, making it clear to the bully that their actions are disapproved of and are unacceptable. Students should inform a member of staff if they suspect bullying is taking place. Racial and homophobic bullying incidents are logged separately and are reported to Torbay Local Authority.

Serious or persistent cases of bullying could lead to fixed term exclusion or ultimately to permanent exclusion.

In supporting the College's Anti-Bullying Policy, parents and carers can help by:

- ▲ Setting a good example;
- ▲ Opening up channels of communication with the College– write a note, speak to someone, come into school to talk to staff (Tutor, Pastoral Support Manager or Head of Year in the first instance);
- ▲ Being alert to any signs of upset;
- ▲ Talking regularly at home about College life;
- ▲ Showing interest in friendships, class work, the journey to and from school and all other aspects of school life;
- ▲ Informing the Tutor, Pastoral Support Manager or Head of Year about any concerns, even if only initially for College to keep an eye on the situation without intervening;
- ▲ Encouraging and supporting their children to cope with awkward situations, striking a balance between sheltering their children and expecting them to cope with difficult situations on their own;
- ▲ Reminding their children that there are occasions when everyone needs support and help from others;
- ▲ Discussing with the tutor or Head of House ways in which their child can be supported by the College and can help support her/himself;
- ▲ Letting their children know how strongly they disapprove if s/he has bullied someone;
- ▲ Being aware of and monitoring their children's use of social media, ensuring that the highest privacy settings are applied to their children's accounts.

Students can help by:

- ▲ Understanding what bullying is;
- ▲ Not being involved in bullying;
- ▲ Being a supportive friend;
- ▲ Respecting the rights of others;
- ▲ Speaking out about bullying in general;
- ▲ Speaking up if you know someone is being bullied;
- ▲ Having friends who respect the rights of other people;
- ▲ Influencing friends to respect the rights of others;
- ▲ Always using appropriate language or behaviour (including body language);
- ▲ Trying to imagine what it might feel like to be bullied;
- ▲ Recognising how your own behaviour might be considered as bullying;
- ▲ Making an effort to be supportive of other students;
- ▲ Not joining in if someone is being bullied or giving in to peer pressure to be nasty to someone;
- ▲ Involving an adult or teacher quickly when you or another student is being upset by others;
- ▲ Making sure that the highest privacy settings are applied to your social media accounts and that passwords are not shared;
- ▲ Not posting offensive or threatening messages or images on social media sites;
- ▲ Understanding that the sharing of indecent images under the age of 18 is illegal.

6. Useful Websites and Links

There are lots of websites that are available to give advice, support and guidance about bullying. These are just some that you might find useful:

Website	Twitter	Support
www.kidpower.org	@Kidpower_Intl	Kidpower is a non-profit leader in bullying, child abuse and abduction prevention, stranger safety, and self-defence skill training for people of all ages.
www.antibullyingalliance.org.uk	@ABAonline	The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) is a unique coalition of organisations and individuals, who work together to stop bullying and create safer environments in which children and young people can live, grow, play and learn.
www.bullying.co.uk	@bullyinguk	Anti-Bullying Network is an independent operation with the following objectives: to support anti-bullying work in schools and to provide a free website.
www.childline.org.uk	@childline	Childline is yours – a free, private and confidential service where you can be you. Whatever your worry, whenever you need help, however you want to get in touch.
www.stonewall.org.uk	@stonewalluk	Stonewall was founded in 1989, and since then has been at the forefront of unprecedented social and legal advancement for lesbian, gay and bisexual people living in Britain. In 2015 we extended our remit to campaign for trans equality.
www.kidscape.org.uk	@Kidscape	We equip young people, parents and professionals with the skills to tackle bullying and safeguarding issues across the UK.
www.thinkuknow.co.uk	@ThinkuknowUK	Sex. Relationships. The Internet. Three things that get a little bit complicated.

The Spires College Twitter account @SpiresCollege follows all of the above sites and many more, so is always a wealth of information on all aspects of bullying issues.

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