



Anti-Bullying Policy

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AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

At Moreton Hall, our community is based upon respecting and caring for each other. We are committed to providing a safe and inclusive environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so that every one of our pupils can develop his or her full potential. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed, orderly atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other.

Moreton Hall prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting Moreton Hall in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together. Acceptance of this policy forms part of our standard terms and conditions. This policy is available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils on our website and on request. It is also available and known to staff and boarders, including junior and recently appointed staff.

Bullying, harassment and victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the school. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable. This policy applies to all day and boarding pupils in the school, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

1. Definition of Bullying

Bullying is the hurting, harming or humiliating of another person by physical (including sexual), verbal (including email, chat room and SMS messages), and emotional means (by excluding, 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. It can also be overt and intimidating.

Bullying may involve actions or comments that are racist, sexual or sexist, homophobic, which focus on religion, cultural background, because a child is adopted or a carer, disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape). Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time and can involve everyone - pupils, other young people, staff and parents.

2. Cyberbullying - definition

Mr Bill Belsey, the creator of the web site: <http://www.cyberbullying.org/> defined this unpleasant and particularly intrusive phenomenon in the following terms:

"Cyberbullying 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."

Cyberbullying can involve Social Networking Sites, like Facebook, emails and mobile phones used for both SMS & MMS messages and as cameras.

3. The School's response to bullying

At Moreton Hall, we always treat bullying, including allegations of bullying, very seriously. It conflicts sharply with the school's policy on equal opportunities, as well as with its social and moral principles. Bullying can be so serious that it causes psychological damage, eating disorders, self-harm and even suicide, and, whilst bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.

4. 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 spoiled 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 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 in place in order to ensure that bullying never becomes a problem which is associated with Moreton Hall:

- All new pupils (including boarders and our youngest pupils) are briefed thoroughly on the school's expected standards of behaviour. They are told what to do if they encounter bullying. Telling a member of staff is the first and best course of action.
- All new members of staff are given guidance on the school's anti-bullying policy and in how to react to allegations of bullying before their first week at Moreton Hall. They are required to read the school's policy as part of their induction. 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. Beat Bullying: Talk to a Teacher is repeated throughout each forum. The programme is structured to enforce the message about community involvement and taking care of each other.

- Other lessons, particularly RE and English 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 staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place in line with our ethos and policy of honesty. The tag-line: Beat Bullying: Talk to a Teacher should be familiar to every pupil at Moreton Hall.
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents. Records of any incidents are kept securely in the School office so that patterns of behaviour can be identified and monitored.
- We have a strong and experienced pastoral team of Tutors and Matrons who support the Headmaster and are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority, and are alert to possible signs of bullying.
- Our management team gives support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both victims and bullies. INSET sessions are held regularly, using outside experts.
- Our independent listener is an important part of our pastoral support service, providing both an impartial, approachable ear and advice. On occasion, a member of our management team may refer a pupil to her.
- 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, there are strong teams of tutors supporting the Headmaster and the Matrons, who act 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. A member of the boarding house staff is always on duty to supervise the pupils.
- There are no 'initiation ceremonies' or any such practices which cause pain, anxiety or humiliation as part of our boarding culture.
- We encourage close contact between the staff and parents/guardians, and would always make contact if we were worried about a pupil's well-being.
- All boarders and their parents are made aware of the contents of the school's anti-bullying policy and are aware that they can download copies from the school's web site. All boarders know how to report anxieties to Matron or to another member of the pastoral team.
- Our Medical Centre and boarding house display advice on where pupils can seek help, including details of confidential help lines and web sites connecting to external specialists, such as Childline.
- All pupils have access to a telephone helpline, enabling them to call for support in private.
- We operate a peer counselling scheme, whereby trained older pupils are encouraged to offer advice and support to younger pupils.
- We provide leadership training to our Head Boy/Girl and their team of senior pupils which specifically covers the importance of offering support and assistance to younger and to vulnerable pupils through our 'Young Leaders' scheme..
- 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. Cyberbullying – Preventative measures

In addition to the preventative measures described above, Moreton Hall:

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its charter for the safe use of the internet. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our IT Department monitors pupils' use.
- May impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet.
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying in PSHE and IT lessons, which covers blocking, removing contacts from 'buddy' lists and sharing personal data.
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe.
- Mobile phones are not permitted in school unless specific permission is given by the Headmaster. In any such cases, strict restrictions will still apply.
- The use of cameras in washing and changing areas, or in the bedrooms of boarding houses, is strictly prohibited.

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.
- He/she will inform an appropriate member of the management team as soon as possible.
- The victim will be interviewed on his/her own and asked to write an account of events.
- The bully, together with all others who were involved, will be interviewed individually and asked to write an immediate account of events.
- The incident should be recorded and signed and dated before it is given to the headmaster who is responsible for keeping all records of bullying and other serious disciplinary offences, securely in his office.
- The victim will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the management team, separately from the alleged perpetrator. He/she will be offered support to develop a strategy to help him or her.
- The alleged bully will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the victim, and it will be made clear why his/her behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. He/she will be offered guidance on modifying his other behaviour, together with any appropriate disciplinary sanctions as set out in the school's Good Behaviour Policy; for example, detention, withdrawal of privileges or suspension. In particularly serious and/or persistent cases, the bully should expect permanent exclusion.
- The parents/guardians of all parties should be informed and invited into school to discuss the matter. Their support should be sought.

- A way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and counselling, should be agreed. This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for children who are being bullied and for pupils who bully others, as well as dealing with appropriate disciplinary measures in accordance with the school's Good Behaviour Policy.
- A meeting involving all the parties, with close staff supervision, could 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 cases, and only after the Headmaster 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 the 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. The school may exclude a pupil, either temporarily or permanently, in cases of severe and persistent bullying and in the event that the support put in place for the bully does not result in the modification of behaviour to an acceptable level.

8. EYFS Children

Even the 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 other's possessions. We expect them to be honest, helpful and polite, and to work hard and to listen to others. They should respect everyone and learn to value differences and diversity.

We explain to children why some forms of behaviour are unacceptable and hurtful to others. We rarely need to impose sanctions; but sometimes we may remove a treat for hurtful behaviour. Occasionally, a child may be sent to see the Head of the Pre-prep, who will explain the inappropriateness of a particular action; but such instances are rare. Parents are always informed via a note in the homework diary when any sanction or reproof is needed, and in cases of repeated instances of hurtful or inappropriate behaviour, they will be invited into the school to discuss the situation with their child's Teacher and the Head of the Pre-prep and to agree a joint way of handling the difficulty.

9. Complaints Procedure

Parents and pupils are encouraged to use our complaints procedure (which is published on our web site) if they feel that their concerns about bullying (or anything else) are not being addressed properly. Parents of EYFS children should be aware that they have the right to refer a complaint directly to Ofsted, if they are unhappy with the way in which their complaint has been handled.

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