

COLCHESTER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

A5. ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

COMMITTEE	Curriculum & Student Matters
NOMINATED GOVERNOR	Denise Goodey (Safeguarding Governor)
SLT RESPONSIBLE	Mrs Dawn Frost Associate Principal
REVIEW	Every 2 Years or following changes to Statutory Guidance
POLICY REVIEWED	January 2025 March 2025 update of Appendix I
APPROVED BY THE GOVERNING BODY	June 2025
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1. INTRODUCTION

Policy Aim:

This policy forms part of the overall school Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions policy at Colchester County High School for Girls. The aim of this anti-bullying policy is to ensure that CCHSG remains a supportive, caring and safe environment for all, free from bullying.

This policy applies to all students and staff at the school irrespective of their age and whether or not a student is in the care of the school when / if bullying behaviour occurs. While this policy focuses mainly on the bullying of students by other students, it is recognised that other forms of bullying may occur, and this is addressed in Section 5.

Aims:

Through the operation of this policy the School aims to:

- maintain and drive a positive and supportive culture among all students and staff throughout the school.
- deter bullying behaviour (including online/cyber bullying), detect and investigate it when it occurs, and deal with it by counselling and or disciplinary sanctions and, if necessary, by suspension or permanent exclusion.

This policy will also apply to bullying (including online/cyber bullying) behaviour outside of the school of which the school becomes aware, although in the majority of these cases the matter will be referred to the local Police.

2. BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

At Colchester County High School for Girls we believe that everyone should be treated with dignity and respect.

Bullying behaviour is always unacceptable and will not be tolerated at the school because:

- it is harmful to the person who is bullied, and to those who engage in Bullying behaviour, and those who support them (Bullying Bystanders), and can in some cases lead to lasting well-being issues, psychological damage and even suicide
- it interferes with a student's right to enjoy their learning and leisure time free from intimidation; and

- it is contrary to all our aims and values, our internal school culture and the reputation of the school.

Definition:

The Anti-Bullying Alliance and its members have a shared definition of bullying based on research from across the world over the last 30 years.

ABA defines bullying as: “The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online” (Source: anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk [accessed 22.01.2023])

There are four key elements to this definition. These are the actions are:

- hurtful in their nature
 - feature the repetition of events – not a one off
 - involve a power imbalance
 - are intentional in their nature
- (Source: anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk [accessed 22.01.2023])

Bullying may be:

- Physical: Hitting, slapping, kicking, pushing/shoving people around, spitting; or taking, damaging or hiding possessions;
- Verbal: Name-calling, taunting, teasing, insulting or demanding money;
- Exclusionary behaviour: Intimidating, isolating or excluding a person from a group;
- Indirect unkindness: Spreading rumours or writing unkind notes, phone texts or e-mails;
- Online/Cyber bullying: Using the internet, mobile telephones, social networking sites (e.g. WhatsApp or Snapchat) or any other form of electronic communication to deliberately upset someone else (see section 2.2 below)

2.1 Bullying may also be:

- sexual - talking to or touching someone in a sexually inappropriate way
- sexist - related to a person's gender or gender identity or reassignment
- racist, or regarding someone's religion or culture (e.g. Antisemitic or Anti-Islamic)
- related to a person's sexual orientation (homophobic), or perceived sexual orientation
- related to pregnancy or maternity
- related to a person's home circumstances; or

- related to a person's disability, special educational needs, learning difficulties, health, appearance, or even of another person with whom the student is associated e.g. a brother, sister, boyfriend
- related to damaging someone else's property or belongings deliberately
- related to coercing someone to do something they do not want to do

2.2 Cyber bullying

The School has a separate policy which deals with "cyber bullying" (see ICT E-safety & Acceptable Use Policy). Cyber bullying is the use of information and communications technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else. Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988 it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication with intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender. Instances relating to cyber bullying and safety are taken seriously and may lead to sanctions outlined in the School Behaviour Sanctions and Rewards Policy.

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassment or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986. If school staff feel that an offence may have been committed they should seek assistance from the police.

Hate crimes and incidents:

A hate crime is any occurrence that is perceived by the victim, or any other person to be one of the following:

- racist
- homophobic
- transphobic (discrimination against transsexual or transgender people)

Or because of a person's:

- religion
- beliefs
- gender identity or
- disability
- Perceived socio-economic status

A hate crime is not only limited to a personal attack. Name calling, violence, property attacks such as graffiti, verbal attacks, and abusive messages either by phone, mail or via the internet (i.e via email or an app-based social media or communication platform) can also be seen as hate crimes. No hate crime is too minor to report to the police, they will record all incidents brought to their attention whether or not a crime has been committed.

A hate incident is any incident, which may or may not be a crime, which the victim or any other person perceives to be motivated by hostility or prejudice towards any aspect of a person's identity.

2.3

The Principal¹ has a specific statutory power to discipline students for poor behaviour outside of the school premises. Section 89 (5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 give the Principal the power to regulate students' conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of staff. This can relate to any bullying or perceived Hate Crime incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside local shops or in a town centre.

Where bullying or perceived Hate Crime incidents outside of school is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and acted on if appropriate. The Principal should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or other relevant external party. If the misbehaviour could be deemed criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

2.4 Intention

Not all bullying is deliberate or intended to hurt. Some individuals may see their hurtful conduct as "teasing", "banter", "a game" or "for the good of" the other person. These forms of bullying are equally unacceptable but may not be malicious and can often be corrected quickly with advice and without disciplinary sanctions. A bully who does not respond appropriately to advice or sanctions could ultimately face the following disciplinary sanctions:

- official warnings
- community involvement/work in the school
- removal of privileges/activities
- detention(s)
- exclusion from certain areas of the school premises
- either inclusion, fixed term suspension or permanent exclusion

2.5 Responsibility

It is everyone's responsibility to ensure, whatever the circumstances, that no-one becomes a victim of bullying. For example, a person may be vulnerable to bullying because of their age, physical appearance, nationality, colour, gender, sexual orientation, religion, culture or disability, or because they are new in the school, appear to be uncertain or have no friends. They may also become a target because of an irrational decision or perception by a bully, or a group of people facilitating the bully by being a 'bullying bystander' and not reporting the incidents of abuse.

¹ The Alpha Trust use the term 'Principal' to identify the person with responsibilities of headship within each Academy who may be referred to locally as Headteacher, Principal, Executive Headteacher, Executive Principal, Head of School or Associate Principal.

2.6 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. Bullying behaviour may also be regarded as threatening behaviour or harassment which can be either a criminal offence or a civil wrong. Misuse of electronic communications could also be a criminal offence, for example it is an offence to send an electronic communication (such as a text message, e-mail or social media platform like WhatsApp or Snapchat) to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety.

3. ANTI-BULLYING CULTURE & EXPECTATIONS

3.1 Ethos

Our expectation of all members of the school community is that everyone will uphold the Code of Conduct printed in the student planner and published in the Staff Handbook. A student or a member of staff who witnesses or hears of an incident of bullying should report it. All complaints of bullying behaviour will always be taken seriously and no one should tolerate unkind actions or remarks or stand by when someone else is being bullied.

3.2 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; and
- positive attitudes are fostered regardless of gender or sexuality through the curriculum, assembly programme, PSHCE and Tutor programme

3.3 Staff

Through their training and experience, members of staff are expected to promote an anti-bullying culture by:

- celebrating achievement
- anticipating problems and providing support
- disciplining fairly, consistently and reasonably, taking into account any special educational needs or disabilities of the student and the needs of vulnerable students
- making opportunities to listen to students
- acting as advocates of students

3.4 Students

Through our pastoral care systems, students are informed and taught that bullying will not be tolerated in the School (See Appendix I) They are encouraged:

- 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 someone they trust, if they have a problem
- not to feel guilty about airing complaints
- not to be a 'Bullying Bystander' and facilitate bullying by inaction

4. ANTI-BULLYING ACTION

4.1 Vigilance

Members of staff are vigilant at all times but particularly:

- before/after school and at break/lunch times
- in the Dining Hall queue and in the Dining Hall itself
- in the transition between lessons, including movement in corridors and on the staircase
- in communal areas like changing rooms and toilets.

4.2 Meetings

Bullying is regularly discussed in meetings between:

- members of the Senior Leadership Team
- Senior Leadership Team and Student Voice
- Year Leaders, Form Tutors and students.
- Year Leaders, School staff, and support staff

The result of these meetings is to feedback information about friendship patterns, particular incidents, any student who seems to be isolated, any growing "power base" and any known conflict between a member of staff and a student, or between students so that strategies can be developed to prevent bullying incidents.

4.3 Education

Measures are taken throughout each year to educate students about bullying and school policy. These measures include:

- Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), particularly in Year 7, but returned to throughout the programme in all years
- Anti-Bullying information and advice in the student planner written by Student Voice
- Anti-Bullying posters/messages placed around the school
- Anti-Bullying messages are given in assemblies
- Hot-spot mapping of the school to capture areas that might be deemed as places where people feel vulnerable
- Annual Anspear Survey which directly asks the question regarding bullying
- A specific, annual Anti-bullying assembly led by the Student Voice Team

4.4 Staff training

Appropriate training in all aspects of care is arranged to ensure that Pastoral Leaders, Pastoral Assistants and other staff have the necessary professional skills, especially awareness of the risk and indications of child abuse and bullying, and how to deal with cases including basic counselling skills.

4.5 Student responsibilities

The School emphasises with all students the role which is expected of them in setting a good example, in particular:

- all senior students have the opportunity for year group duties as Year 12 Form or Subject Ambassadors but senior students who do not wish to have extended responsibilities are not coerced.
- the responsibilities of senior students are appropriately limited and students may occasionally receive training on peer mentoring and how to listen to younger students sensitively
- members of staff expect prefects to offer supervisory support
- Youth Health Champions receive specific training for their role which may include providing support for student wellbeing.

4.6 Record Keeping and Monitoring

The pastoral team maintains records of the welfare and development of individual students via the SIMS and CPOMS recording systems. In addition, every complaint or report of bullying must be investigated and entered onto CPOMS, from which a log can be extracted by the designated member of the Senior Leadership Team. The designated member of the Senior Leadership Team monitors all incidents logged to enable patterns to be identified, both in relation to individual students and across the school as a whole and to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's approach. Incidents of bullying are discussed at weekly Senior Leadership Meetings.

5. PROCEDURES

Every member of the School community should understand 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 nearly every problem of bullying
- a student who complains will receive support and advice and in many cases the problem can be dealt with on a no names basis; and
- the primary aim will be for the bullying to cease, not the punishment of the bully unless this is necessary.

5.1 Reporting Bullying Complaints

A. Students

A student who is being bullied, or who is worried about another student being bullied, should report the issue without delay to someone they trust and can do so in several ways.

They can:

- Tell Form Tutor, Year Leader, Pastoral Assistant or any teacher.
- Tell parents or another adult

- Tell a Form Prefect or Youth Health Champion who will pass the information on to an adult
- Keep a diary of events and incidents to show someone
- Anonymously report the incident on Whisper via the school website
- Contact Childline (0800 1111) or other anti-bullying organisations

B. Parents

Parents who are concerned that their child is being bullied should inform their child's Form Tutor, Year Leader or Pastoral Assistant without delay. Parents of both parties will be informed of the investigation into bullying and any outcomes that may arise.

C. Staff

This policy focuses mainly on the bullying of students by students although it is recognised that a staff member could be a victim and on occasion may be perceived to be guilty of bullying. Staff members who are concerned about being bullied or harassed should report the issue according to the School Grievance Procedures. Students and parents who feel that a member of staff is bullying should report this in accordance with the procedures set out above in section B. Complaints against teachers will be dealt with in accordance with Staff Disciplinary Procedures.

5.2 Initial Reporting & Action

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

- firstly, respond quickly and sensitively by offering advice, support and reassurance to the alleged victim
- report the allegation to the relevant Year Leader or Pastoral Assistant of the victim and the alleged bully as soon as possible

The Year Leader must:

- record the complaint on CPOMS and
- discuss the issue with the Principal to agree a strategy, and who will take the lead.

5.3 Assessment

The victim's Year Leader will normally see the alleged victim and (unless the case is very serious) any witnesses without delay and form an initial view of the allegation. Written students accounts may also be taken at this stage.

The assessment will consider:

- the nature of the incident(s) - physical? verbal? exclusionary? etc...
- is it a "one-off" incident involving an individual or a group?
- is it part of a pattern of behaviour by an individual or a group?
- has physical injury been caused? Who should be informed – Year Leader, Vice Principal, Principal, Parents, the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead, 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 not too serious include:

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

5.4 Serious incidents

If the Year Leader/Pastoral Assistant believes that serious bullying behaviour has occurred involving a student or has recurred after warnings have been given to the perpetrator, they must inform the School's Designated Safeguard Lead and the Linked member of the SLT. The Executive Principal should also be informed.

The relevant Year Leader or linked member of the SLT will interview the alleged victim and alleged bully separately, and take witness statements if applicable:

- to confirm the facts of the case, if considered necessary; and
- to decide on the action to be taken in accordance with the range of action set out below.

The Year Leader/Pastoral Assistant/linked member of the SLT will notify the parents of the victim and bully, giving them details of the case and the action being taken.

5.5 Range of Action

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

- advice and support for the alleged victim and, where appropriate, establishing a course of action to help the alleged victim including support from external services where appropriate
- advice and support to the alleged bully in trying to change their behaviour. This may include clear instructions and a warning or final warning
- consideration of the motivation behind the bullying behaviour and whether external services should be used to tackle any underlying issues of the alleged bully which contributed to the bullying behaviour. If these considerations lead to any concerns that the bully may be at risk of harm, the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures will be followed
- a supervised meeting between the alleged bully and the alleged victim to discuss their differences and the ways in which they may be able to avoid future conflict
- a disciplinary sanction against the alleged bully, in accordance with the School's Behaviour and Discipline Policy such as a detention. In a very serious case or a case of persistent bullying, a student may be permanently excluded
- action to break up a "power base"
- moving either the bully or victim to another class after consultation with the student, parents and the relevant staff
- involving Social Services or the Police
- notifying the parents of one or both students about the case and the action which has been taken
- such other action as may appear to the Principal to be appropriate

- noting the outcome on CPOMS so that a Bullying Log can be extracted.

5.6 Monitoring

The position should be monitored for as long as necessary thereafter. Action may include:

- sharing information with some or all colleagues and with students in the class so that they may be alert to the need to monitor certain students closely
- on-going counselling and support
- vigilance in lessons and in lesson transition
- mentioning the incident at meetings of staff and in Pastoral Meetings
- reviewing vulnerable individuals and areas of the School
- liaison between Year Leaders, the outcome being recorded in the incident log.

5.7 Formal complaint

If the victim or parents are not satisfied with the action taken, they should be advised to make a formal complaint, according to the School Complaints Procedure.

REFERENCES

1. Equality: This policy takes account of the School's public sector equality duty as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2011.
2. Children's Act 1989
3. Paragraph 10, Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2012
4. DfE Guidance Preventing and Tackling Bullying updated July 2017
5. Section 89 (5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
6. Article 12 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child -1989
7. Keeping Children Safe in Education – September 2022
8. Education Act 2011
9. Malicious Communications Act 1988
10. Protection from Harassment Act 1997

Linked Policies

A3 Safeguarding

A4 Behaviour Sanctions and Rewards Policy

A6 Exclusion policy

26 Code of Conduct Policy

44 ICT e-Safety & Acceptable Use Policy

APPENDIX I Student Planner Advice



Anti-Bullying at CCHSG

At CCHSG we say 'No' to Bullying!

'Bullying behaviour is identified as repeated behaviour or repeated perceived behaviour which exhibits hostility towards another individual and is usually hurtful and deliberate in intent'

Bullying is making someone feel uncomfortable, unhappy, vulnerable or victimised by:

- Name calling
- Taking jokes too far
- Making someone take the blame for things
- Spreading rumours and general gossiping
- Not respecting the beliefs/ morals of others

Cyber bullying – people can also be treated unkindly or made to feel intimidated by text, phone, email or on social media.

If you are being bullied or harassed the key things to do are:

- Tell someone you trust – a friend, your parents or another adult, your Form Tutor, Year Leader, one of the Pastoral Team or any teacher
- Report any concerns anonymously on *Whisper* via the school website
- Keep a diary of events and incidents to show someone
- Confront the bully if you feel able to do so and making them aware – they may not know that they are upsetting you

If a student feels that they are being bullied, the school will do everything it can to prevent it from happening and, if it does happen, deal with the incident in a firm, fair and supportive way.

The school is committed to ensuring that all staff and students treat each other with dignity and respect.

Advice about bullying could also be sought from:

www.childline.org.uk
www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
neveracceptable@cchsg.com

Bullying can also be reported anonymously via the *Whisper* portal on the school website