

THE ELMS
EST 1614

10a - Counter-Bullying Policy	
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We recognise that all members of the school staff, including volunteers and peripatetic staff, share the duty of care for children at the school. We aim to ensure that the health, safety and welfare of all pupils is paramount. This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Safeguarding policy which includes Child Protection procedures. This policy should also be read alongside the School Behaviour Policy, Online Safety Policy, ICT Acceptable Use Policy, SEND Policy and Equality Objectives.

Principles

- The Headmaster, staff and pupils of The Elms School, agree that we will not tolerate any form of bullying.
- Everyone who is part of The Elms School community has a responsibility for one another.
- Pupils who are aware of bullying taking place but who choose not to report it, will be considered as associates of the bully, there must not be a 'culture of silence'.
- Our priority is to prevent bullying, rather than just punish it. It should be recognised, however, that bullying is a major offence and may be punished by suspension or, ultimately, expulsion.

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This policy is written with regard to DfE document “Preventing and Tackling Bullying”.

1. Preventative Measures:

We take the following preventative measures in order to attempt to ensure that bullying does not become a problem:

- All pupils are briefed thoroughly on the school's expected standards of behaviour. They are told what to do if they encounter bullying. We guarantee that whistle-blowers who act in good faith will not be penalised and will be supported.
- The school has a Code of Conduct, written by the children, that promotes positive and desirable behaviour to all others and is displayed throughout the school.
- Annual online safety talks (including cyber-bullying) for staff, parents and pupils in 3 tailored sessions.
- All staff have termly training/updates on safeguarding children.
- Designated staff complete online training modules about bullying
- All staff sign to confirm they have read and understood the school's counter-bullying policy at the start of the year.
- Our RSHE, English and Drama lessons are structured to give pupils an awareness of their social, moral, spiritual and cultural responsibilities, reinforcing the message that bullying (including cyber-bullying) is unacceptable.
- All pupils are strongly encouraged to tell a member of staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place. We encourage close contact between the pastoral team and parents and would always make contact if we were worried about a pupil's well-being.
- The informal environment within the boarding department is important in reinforcing a pupil's standards and values, providing the opportunity for friendly, informal discussion of matters of concern with the individual pupil aside from the classroom.
- All pupils have access to a telephone, enabling them to call for support in private.
- Pupils are issued with an advice booklet on counter bullying (also sent to parents).
- The School recognises that pupils with SEND and other vulnerabilities may experience an increased risk of bullying and will ensure reasonable adjustments and appropriate support measures are implemented where required.

There are various channels whereby children and staff are able to communicate any concerns that they may have:

- the Listening Tree located throughout the school gives a clear guideline as to who may be contacted.
- at the beginning of each term children and staff are reminded as to where and how they are able to implement these concerns.
- on a daily basis any concerns or events reflective of a child's welfare are shared and recorded on MyConcern by all staff members.

- on a weekly basis a Boarding Meeting, Staff Meeting and Senior Management meeting take place to cater for all aspects of school life, including children's welfare.
- Parents who have a concern related to bullying are encouraged to make contact with the Deputy Head Wellbeing or Tutors
- Pupils can log a concern / request for support anonymously, if preferred, through 'Confide' on theirs, or any, computer in school

Cyberbullying – Preventative Measures:

In addition to the preventative measures described above:

- We prohibit the general use of mobile phones at school (full boarders are permitted to have a mobile securely stored with matrons to contact home, under remote supervision – these must be handed in after calling/messaging)
- Cameras may only be used under supervision, e.g. Camera Club, school project or the annual trip to France, and must be handed in for safe keeping.
- We may impose sanctions for misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet.
- Internet usage is monitored and suitable filters are in place to help prevent access to unsuitable material.

2. Definition of bullying

Bullying is behaviour that is repeated over time and intentionally hurts another pupil or group, physically or emotionally and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion or belief, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, SEND, looked-after status, caring responsibilities or any other protected characteristic, or because a child is adopted, looked after or is a carer - it may occur directly or through cyber-technology (social websites, mobile 'phones, text messages, photographs and email). Bullying may occur face-to-face or online and may be motivated by prejudice, discrimination or perceived difference. The School recognises that bullying can include child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment, discriminatory behaviour, image-based abuse and online abuse.

Bullying was once used to refer only to physical violence by one person towards another. The widely accepted definition has now been extended to include cyber-bullying, prejudice based bullying, and discriminatory bullying, which could enact themselves as:

- **Physical:** being punched, pushed or hurt; made to give up money or belongings; having property, clothes or belongings damaged; being forced to do something they don't want to.
- **Indirect:** having nasty stories/rumours told about them; being left out or excluded by other people; writing graffiti about another person.

- **Verbal:** name-calling, sarcasm.
- **Emotional:** excluding other people, particularly from groups, tormenting, ridicule, humiliation, taunting.
- **Online:** any of the above sent via mobile 'phones (text messages, calls) and computers (e-mails, websites, chat rooms) is referred to in the Safeguarding policy.

Any form of bullying is a form of child-on-child abuse and is taken very seriously by the school. Where bullying behaviour reaches the threshold of child-on-child abuse, the matter will be managed through safeguarding procedures and may involve external agencies as appropriate.

3. Identifying incidents of bullying

At the start of the school year, and at other times throughout, pupils and staff are made aware of how to identify incidents of bullying. Particular attention is given to bullying and cyber-bullying in RSHE lessons, (drawing attention to the role of bystanders in cases of cyber-bullying), Assemblies and internal INSET for staff.

- All staff will undergo 'refresher' training every year on aspects of bullying, cyber-bullying and how to respond during INSET.
- All staff must be *aware* of the problem and fully understand that bullying can take place anywhere at school.

4. Recording incidents of bullying

- a) An initial communication reporting the incident should be sent to the Deputy Head Wellbeing
- b) The event will be recorded on the School's safeguarding and behaviour recording systems within 24 hours, including actions taken, outcomes reached and follow-up arrangements.
- c) The bullying log is shared with the Headmaster, Director of Studies, SMT and others deemed appropriate.

5. Investigation and action

- a) The DHW will then discuss the accusations and investigate the alleged bully/perpetrator(s) appropriately, until an outcome is concluded.
- b) They will ensure that the victim(s) is and feels safe and will listen and speak to all children involved about the incident separately.
- c) Appropriate action will be taken to end the bullying behaviour or threats of bullying.
- d) Action could include educational responses as well as disciplinary action. Any disciplinary action will be applied fairly, consistently and reasonably,

taking into account any special educational needs or disabilities and the needs of vulnerable pupils.

- e) Staff will reinforce to the bully that their behaviour is unacceptable and if possible, the pupils will be reconciled.
- f) An attempt will be made, and support given, to help the bully (bullies) understand and change his/her/their behaviour as well as making sure that pupils are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders. It will be important to try to discover what the triggers are for bullying, ie is something going on in the child's life which is giving rise to poor behaviour towards others?
- g) In serious cases of bullying, the DHW will use the safeguarding referral framework (see safeguarding appendix) to assess if the incident is a safeguarding issue. In such cases, the Designated Safeguarding Lead in School, Social Services or police will be consulted.
- h) Parents of pupils who are either victims or perpetrators of bullying will be fully informed of events and involved in the ongoing support of their children.
- i) The school follows a three-stage process to incidents of bullying:
 - Stage One: Is a zero blame approach, where the perpetrators of the bullying are spoken to about their actions and the seriousness of them. There may or may not be a sanction imposed at this stage, depending on the severity of the incident. This is to reduce the risk of further repercussions and to allow for both sides to reconcile. This is recorded in the bullying log.
 - Stage Two: If there is a repeated incident of bullying by the perpetrators towards the same victim and it is proven to have occurred, the Head will consider an appropriate sanction, which may include suspension where proportionate and reasonable in the circumstances. This will be set by the Head and parents will be informed.
 - Stage Three: In the event that there is further evidence of bullying by the same perpetrators, then the Head may consider permanent exclusion in accordance with the School's Behaviour Policy.

6. Review of Bullying incidents and the effectiveness of the Counter-Bullying Policy

Follow-up welfare checks should take place with both the child experiencing bullying and the child displaying bullying behaviour in order to monitor wellbeing, effectiveness of interventions and any ongoing safeguarding concerns.

- a) The DHW and HM will meet when required to:
 - i) review all individual cases of bullying
 - ii) analyse reported cases to identify trends and patterns of behaviour
 - iii) evaluate the effectiveness of the approaches adopted to deal with bullying behaviour
- b) The minutes of these meetings will be shared with the SMT.

- c) Governors will receive anonymised information about bullying trends, protected-characteristic incidents, online bullying incidents and outcomes, enabling them to monitor the effectiveness and fairness of the school's approach.

Further information can be found via the following DfE advice on Preventing and tackling bullying:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444862/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf

APPENDIX A

BULLYING - ADVICE TO PUPILS:

(Disseminated through lessons, RSHE, 1:1, Assemblies, Leaflet)

The Definition:

Bullying is behaviour that is repeated over time and intentionally hurts another pupil or group physically or emotionally and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability, or because a child is adopted or is a carer - it may occur directly or through cyber-technology (social websites, mobile 'phones, text messages, photographs and email); Bullying was once used to refer only to physical violence by one person towards another. The widely accepted definition has now been extended to include the following:

Bullying includes (but is not limited to) the following:

1. **Physical:** being punched, pushed or hurt; made to give up money or belongings; having property, clothes or belongings damaged; being forced to do something they don't want to.
2. **Emotional: tends to be more verbal.** Having nasty stories/rumours told about them; excluding other people, particularly from groups, tormenting, ridicule, humiliation, taunting; name-calling; sarcasm; writing graffiti about another person.
3. **Cyber-bullying:** any of the above sent via mobile 'phones (text messages, calls) and computers (e-mails, websites, chat rooms); sexting.

Your action

- **When someone else is being bullied or is in distress, report it! Watching and doing nothing associates you with the bully. This is especially the case in cases of cyber-bullying. Even if you are a bystander, or if you belong to an on-line group such as snapchat or WhatsApp, YOU may be contributing to bullying behaviour and causing further harm.**
- At best, tell the bully s/he is 'out of order'.
- At the very least, walk away to express your disapproval of bullying and then tell a member of staff.
- Do not tolerate a bully in your circle of friends
- Bullying is more likely to exist if you remain silent.
- Always treat others as you would like to be treated yourself. Remember that calling someone names, or non-stop teasing, *is* bullying. Do not become a bully yourself.

School action

- **The Headmaster, staff and pupils of The Elms School agree that we will not tolerate any form of bullying.**
- **Everyone who is part of The Elms School community has a responsibility for one another.**
- **Pupils who are aware of bullying taking place but who choose not to report it, will be considered as associates of the bully.**

The School will use a myriad of educational elements such as its RSHE programme, whole school assemblies and small group meetings to discuss the differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudiced based language. However, Bullying is a major offence and will be dealt with firmly. In a case where bullying has occurred, the School's action will be:

- a) The Deputy Head Wellbeing and Headmaster will then discuss the accusations and investigate appropriately.
- b) They will ensure that the victim(s) is and feels safe and will listen and speak to all children involved about the incident separately and record (written) what is said.
- c) Appropriate action will be taken to end the bullying behaviour or threats of bullying.
- d) Action could include educational responses as well as disciplinary action. Any disciplinary action will be applied fairly, consistently and reasonably, taking into account any special educational needs or disabilities and the needs of vulnerable pupils.
- e) Staff will reinforce to the bully that their behaviour is unacceptable and if possible, the pupils will be reconciled.
- f) An attempt will be made, and support given, to help the bully (bullies) understand and change his/her/their behaviour as well as making sure that pupils are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders.
- g) In serious cases of bullying, the Deputy Head Wellbeing will use the safeguarding referral framework (see safeguarding appendix) to assess if the incident is a safeguarding issue. In such cases, the Designated Safeguarding Lead in School, Social Services or police will be consulted.

Appendix B

COMBATING CYBER-BULLYING

(Disseminated through lessons, RSHE, 1:1, Assemblies, Leaflet)

Electronic/cyber-bullying is now recognised as a major problem nationally and as such deserves its own section in our Counter-Bullying Policy. It is addressed in detail here.

Cyber-bullying can be defined as 'the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones, email and via social networking sites on the internet, deliberately to upset someone else'. It can be an extension of face-to-face bullying, with technology providing the bully with another route to harass their target. Cyberbullying may include the sharing of images, videos, messages, online comments, group chat activity, anonymous messaging, impersonation, exclusion from online groups, use of artificial intelligence tools and the sharing of harmful or manipulated content.

However, it differs in several significant ways from other kinds of bullying:

- the invasion of home and personal space;
- the difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages,
- the size of the audience,
- perceived anonymity,
- and even the profile of the person doing the bullying and their target.

Cyber-bullying takes different forms:

- threats and intimidation,
- harassment or 'cyber-stalking' (e.g. repeatedly sending unwanted texts, instant messages or by people trying to befriend someone on a social networking site)
- vilification/defamation;
- exclusion or peer rejection,
- impersonation,
- unauthorised publication of private information or images and manipulation.

The School recognises emerging forms of online harm including AI-generated images, manipulated media, deepfake content and technology-assisted harassment. Where such behaviour targets any child it will be treated as bullying and may also constitute a safeguarding concern.

Some cyber-bullying is clearly deliberate and aggressive, but it is important to recognise that some incidents of cyber-bullying are known to be unintentional and the result of simply not thinking about the consequences. What may be sent as a joke may not be received as one, and indeed the distance that technology allows in communication means the sender may not see the impact of the message on the receiver. There is also less opportunity for either party to resolve any

misunderstanding or to feel empathy. It is important that pupils are made aware of the effects of their actions.

In cyber-bullying, bystanders can easily become perpetrators, e.g. by passing on or showing to others images designed to humiliate, or by taking part in online polls or discussion groups. They may not recognise themselves as participating in bullying, but their involvement compounds the misery for the person targeted. It is important that pupils are aware that their actions have severe and distressing consequences, and that participating in such activity will not be tolerated.

There are particular features of cyber-bullying that differ from other forms of bullying which need to be recognised and taken into account when determining how to respond effectively. The key differences are:

- **Impact** — the scale and scope of cyber-bullying can be greater than other forms of bullying.
- **Targets and perpetrators** — the people involved may have a different profile to traditional bullies and their targets.
- **Location** — the 24/7 and any-place nature of cyber-bullying.
- **Anonymity** — the person being bullied will not always know who is attacking them.
- **Motivation** — some pupils may not be aware that what they are doing is bullying.
- **Evidence** — unlike other forms of bullying, the target of the bullying will have evidence of its occurrence.

COUNTER-CYBER-BULLYING CODE - ADVICE TO PUPILS

(Given to Year 7 & 8 Pupils and all parents)

Being sent an abusive or threatening text message, or seeing nasty comments about yourself on a website, can be really upsetting. This code gives you **seven important tips** to protect yourself and your friends from getting caught up in cyber-bullying, and advice on how to report it when it does happen.

1. Always respect others

Remember that when you send a message to someone, you cannot see the impact that your words or images may have on the other person. That is why it is important to always show respect to people and be careful what you say online or what images you send. What you think is a joke may really hurt someone else. Always ask permission before you take a photo of someone.

If you receive a rude or nasty message or picture about someone else, do not forward it. **You could be assisting a bully and even be accused of cyber-bullying yourself. You could also be breaking the law.**

2. Think before you send

It is important to think before you send any images or text about yourself or someone else by email or mobile phone, or before you post information on a website. Remember that what you send can be made public very quickly and could stay online forever. Do you really want your teacher, parents or future employer to see that photo? This is especially the case with social networking sites, where you should apply the tightest possible security settings. Also consider if you would say face to face what you are about to post – if not, it's probably not a good idea!

3. Treat your password like your toothbrush

Don't let anyone know your passwords. It is a good idea to change them on a regular basis. Choosing hard-to-guess passwords with symbols or numbers will help stop people hacking into your account and pretending to be you. Remember to only give your mobile number or personal email address to trusted friends.

4. Block the Bully

Most responsible websites and services allow you to block or report someone who is behaving badly. Make use of these features, they are there for a reason!

5. Don't retaliate or reply

Replying to bullying messages, particularly in anger, is just what the bully wants.

6. Save the evidence

Learn how to keep records of offending messages, pictures or online conversations. **Take screen-shots.** These will help you demonstrate to others what is happening and can be used by the School, internet service provider, mobile phone company, or even the police to investigate the cyber-bullying.

7. **Make sure you inform someone who can help:** You have a right ***not*** to be harassed and bullied online. Tell the provider of the service you have been bullied on (e.g. your mobile-phone operator or social-network provider). Check their websites to see where to report.

Finally, don't just stand there. If you see cyber-bullying going on, support the victim and report the bullying. How would you feel if no one stood up for you?

Appendix D

Job Description: Deputy Head Wellbeing in role of Anti-Bullying officer

Reporting to: Headmaster

Safeguarding: The welfare of children is of the highest priority to The Elms School. Every employee of the School has a responsibility to:

- Protect children from abuse
- Be aware of the School's safeguarding procedures
- Know how to access and implement the required procedures
- Keep a sufficient record of any significant complaint, conversation or event
- Report any matters of concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Attend annual in-service training provided by the School.

Aim

- To reduce the number of incidents of bullying in School
- To support those affected by bullying

How

- To review and update the School's Counter-Bullying Policy document
- To raise awareness within the School of bullying behaviour and how to combat it through:
 - Assemblies
 - Liaison with RSHE teaching staff
 - Management of Pupil-led council
 - Staff training

To gather and analyse information about bullying in the School:

- Pupil voice activities, surveys and wellbeing monitoring conducted regularly and at least annually.
- Post incident interviews with pupils involved (motivations, identifying ways to support both the bully and the bullied)
- Develop effective information sharing process

To assist the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSL in dealing with incidents of bullying (in a non-disciplinary role):

The success of this post is inextricably linked to the communication between the Deputy Head Wellbeing and the Safeguarding officers.

Appendix E

Staff awareness of potential bullying issues

All Elms School staff should be aware that a child may indicate, by different signs or behaviour, that he or she is being bullied. We all need to be aware of these possible signs and investigate further if a child is:

- frightened of coming into School, does not want to leave the house, has a pattern of being ill on the same day/during the same lessons, refuses to get out of the car in the morning
- begins to feign illness on regular days to avoid e.g. games
- becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- any disclosure or indication of self-harm, suicidal ideation or significant mental health concerns must be treated as a safeguarding matter and reported immediately to the DSL.
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning or regularly reports to the medical centre
- begins to underperform in School work
- comes back in to school with clothes torn or books damaged
- regularly reports possessions going 'missing'
- has unexplained cut or bruises
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what is wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be taken seriously and investigated as soon as possible. Staff must therefore raise any concerns about the welfare of children with DHW or HM or DSL.

However, a lot of this can be dealt with by the member of staff, commenting on the spot e.g. that was nasty, that was unnecessary.

Appendix F

Staff strategies to prevent bullying

- Teachers need to define a clear, fair set of rules that protect the interests of all class members. Teachers must not be bullies themselves!
- Teachers need to remember that they teach people, not just a subject. Almost as much thought needs to go into how to manage a class and how to deal with poor discipline (or bullying/cyber-bullying) as into the preparation of teaching material.
- Teachers should think carefully about the seating arrangements in the classroom. It is often better to produce a seating plan than to allow the children to choose for themselves where they sit.
- Care should be exercised when dealing with the parties involved. There may be more to an incident than meets the eye: for example, a victim's reaction could be mistaken for bullying.
- The loud and assertive (or aggressive) pupils should not be allowed to dominate; everyone should be involved in class discussions and nobody "rubbished". In a poorly disciplined school, bullying and anti-social behaviour will flourish.
- Punctuality is vital. Bullying may occur before class starts or as pupils go from one lesson to the next.
- In the boarding house, staff should be very aware of the dangers of bullying or teasing.
- Staff should watch out for queue barging and the exclusion of individuals from a table or the same pupils being made to clear each meal.
- On the games field, staff must not lose sight of the fact that they are primarily teachers, as well as coaches and referees. They should not tolerate anti-social or rude behaviour, regardless of circumstances. We are all very proud of our excellent sporting record, but that must be secondary to good conduct.
- Investigate concerns thoroughly and avoid making assumptions before establishing the facts: "I didn't do it, she's got the wrong end of the stick", "it was a game", "we were having a joke", "it was an accident," "he offered to lend it to me". These matters are hard to prove when the victim has no witnesses to back him or her up but could be important as it may well help to uncover patterns of behaviour.
- Tell Form Teachers / Boarding staff if you are concerned about a child's welfare. However, all staff must inform the DHW or HM with any allegations of bullying.

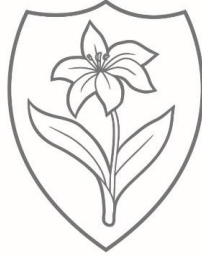
Appendix G

Supporting the person being bullied

Individual staff can do this, but should liaise with the DHW/HM for follow-up support over time. Support can be given by:

- Telling them he/she is not alone in this and that by telling someone about it he/she has already done the difficult part.
- Building up self-esteem.
- Trying to analyse if there is something they do that causes them to be bullied.
- Teaching him/her to be more assertive (not aggressive).
- Encouraging him/her to report any further instances of bullying or teasing.
- Reassuring him/her that it is the bully who “has a problem”, not the victim.

Counter Bullying Leaflet Given to Pupils



THE ELMS

EST 1614

Advice for Pupils Who Are Worried About Bullying

What is Bullying?

"Bullying is continuously being mean. Bullies don't stop even when they're asked."

"A bully is someone who is unkind to someone several times and on purpose"

"A bully is someone, or a group of people, who are horrible and mean every day and don't respect them. It's not bullying if it happens a few times or it was an accident."

"Bullying is where someone is constantly saying rude things about you or to you. If someone is a bit rude one day, it doesn't make it bullying."

"Bullying is when someone is constantly mean to you and wants to hurt you. It can be words or physical."

What do I do if I feel I am being bullied?

The most important thing is to TELL SOMEONE! It is never your fault if you are being bullied and you should not have to deal with it alone. You can talk to;

- ✓ A teacher
- ✓ Another member of staff
- ✓ Your parents
- ✓ A friend
- ✓ A prefect
- ✓ The School's Independent Listener (Reverend Horton) – (07748842825)
- ✓ Childline (0800 1111)

If you are being bullied it is never a good idea to keep it to yourself and hope that it stops. It is always best to ask for help. Sometimes children worry that speaking up will make the bullying worse. The Elms will always do everything possible to make sure this does not happen and to protect you from more bullying.

What do I do if I see bullying happening at school?

- ✓ We all need to look after each other.
- ✓ If you see bullying happening and feel safe to do so you should tell the bully to stop and that what they are doing is wrong.
- ✓ Sometimes people bully because they think people will laugh – don't encourage a bully by laughing at or joining in with what they are doing.
- ✓ Talk to the person being bullied and offer them kindness and support. Advise them to speak to a teacher.
- ✓ Speak to a teacher or member of staff if you are worried – don't assume it will stop or that someone else will ask for help. You should also tell a teacher if you are worried that *you* are bullying someone else and want to talk about it.
- ✓ If online bullying involves photographs, videos, social media, group chats, gaming platforms or AI-generated content, save the evidence and report it immediately to a trusted adult