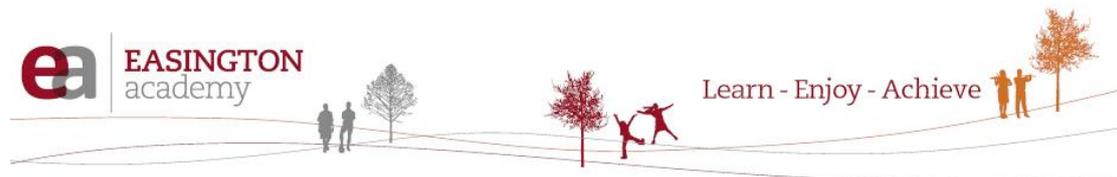




Anti-Bullying Policy

As part of Easington Academy's Pastoral Care Policy



ANTI- BULLYING POLICY

Bullying is a problem for everyone. The victims of bullying are not the only ones damaged by bullying. Those who watch and are aware of bullying are also harmed. These guidelines are based on three important points:

- We cannot expect our students always to draw attention to bullying when it happens. As staff we must accept responsibility and take steps to make sure we are aware of what is going on.
- We must take bullying seriously and do something about it.
- We must provide students with a positive role model in the way we treat students and other adults.

Bullying behaviour isn't always easy to define. Where do you draw the line between good-natured ribbing and bullying? Although teasing resembles bullying because it can prompt feelings of anger or embarrassment, teasing can be less hostile and done with humour, rather than harm. Teasing often promotes an exchange between people rather than a feeling of intimidation. Although a black eye is an obvious sign of bullying, other forms of bullying can be more difficult to spot. Below are some of the forms bullying can take:

Cyber bullying: a relatively recent phenomenon. Through e-mail, instant messaging, internet chat rooms and electronic gadgets such as camera cell phones, cyber bullies forward and spread hurtful messages and/or images. Bullies can use this technology to harass victims at all hours.

Emotional bullying: this can be more subtle and can involve isolating or excluding a child from activities. For example, shunning the victim at lunchtime or on a school outing. This type of bullying is especially common among girls.

Physical bullying: this form of bullying can accompany verbal bullying and involves such things as kicking, hitting, biting, pinching, hair pulling, or the threat of physical bullying.

Racist bullying: this form of bullying involves racial jokes, racial name-calling, offensive gestures or inappropriate comments.

Sexual bullying: this involves unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments. This includes homophobic bullying. This is bullying behaviour that has a specific sexual dimension or a sexual dynamic, and it may be physical, verbal or non verbal/psychological. It is also underpinned by sexual attitudes or gender stereotypes. Sexual bullying can be seen as sexual harassment in schools. Behaviours may involve sexual comments or innuendo, including offensive



comments about sexual reputation; or using language that is designed to subordinate, humiliate or intimidate.

Sexist bullying: this is bullying based on sexual attitudes that when expressed demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. These attitudes are commonly based around the assumption that women are subordinate to men, or inferior. Sexist bullying may sometimes be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviours.

Transphobic bullying: this bullying stems from a hatred or fear of people who are transgender, which is an umbrella term that describes people whose sense of their own gender identity is seen as different to typical gender norms. Transgender people feel that their biological body is not aligned with their inner sense of gender identity. Transphobic bullying is commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes. Boys and girls may be equally affected.

Verbal bullying: this usually involves name-calling, incessant mocking, and laughing at someone else's expense.

Signs of Bullying

The student may:

- Become withdrawn, clingy, moody, aggressive and uncooperative.
- Behave in immature ways.
- Have sleep or appetite problems.
- Have difficulty concentrating.
- Show variation in academic performance.
- Have cuts, bruises, aches and pains without adequate explanation.
- Request extra money or start stealing.
- Have clothes or possessions which are damaged or lost.
- Complain of illness more frequently.
- Show a marked change in a well-established pattern or behaviour e.g.
 - Sudden loss of interest in activities.
 - Changing times of coming to and going from the house.
 - A reluctance to leave home.
 - A request to change school.
 - A refusal to return to a place or activity.

Guidelines for Parents/Carers of Children being Bullied

A child has the right to be safe. Each child has the right to expect parents/carers and teachers to do all they can to keep him or her safe. Children and young people go to a wide variety of places, ranging from schools, activity groups to youth clubs. It is not possible to list all of these. Each organisation has a responsibility to protect young people from bullying.

If you suspect your child is being bullied at school:



- Talk to your child about what is happening.
- Be calm.
- Show sensitivity.
- Reassure your son/ daughter that something will be done and that he/she is not to blame.
- If possible, come to some agreement with your son/daughter about what the next step will be.
- Contact someone at school. There are a number of people you could ask to speak to: your child's Home/School Liaison Officer; the Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral), who is the person with overall responsibility for the anti-bullying policy; your child's tutor.
- Maintain contact with the school until you are satisfied the problem has been dealt with.

Do

- Do listen to your son/daughter.
- Do take their concerns seriously.
- Do encourage your child to tell you what has been happening and in particular to report any trouble that may have occurred.
- Do help your child to find a solution to the problem.
- Do maintain contact with school.
- Do look for any signs of distress shown by your child.

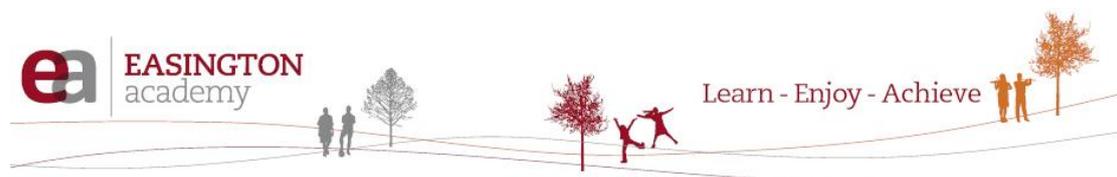
Don't

- Don't ignore what your son/daughter says if they are worried about certain people.
- Don't say things like, "Just put up with it " or "It will just go away." Bullying is never acceptable. Action needs to be taken to stop bullying.
- Don't tell your child to fight back. The bully may be stronger and this could lead to your son/daughter being beaten up.
- Don't try and deal with the situation yourself. Contact school.

Supporting the Child or Young Person

The following actions are appropriate for use with students who are bullied and those who are involved in bullying.

- Protect the young person and stop the bullying.
- Take the necessary steps to prevent any reoccurrence of the bullying. Staff should seek advice if they are uncertain how to deal with an incident of bullying. Advice may come from the student's tutor, the designated senior member of staff, or the student's Home/School Liaison Officer.



- Listen to the student sympathetically and take his/her concerns seriously. Tell the student you are worried about them. Ask them to tell you about the bullying. Listen in a non-judgmental way. Tell them the school will help them to stop the bullying. However, avoid jumping to conclusions. Inevitably, a student is likely to give a one-sided account of an incident and bullying issues can be very complex. The following strategies should be used when investigating an incident of bullying – see Responding to Disclosures
 - Analyse the incident (antecedents, the behaviours , the consequences).
 - Analyse the assumptions driving the bullying (the students directly involved; other students, including bystanders).
 - Understand the dynamics (the time, the location, previous behaviours).
- Ensure the student (victim and alleged bully) understands precisely what action is to be taken.
- Record incident in the Bullying Register (kept in the staffroom) and inform the student's Home/School Liaison Officer and/or the designated senior member of staff.
- Respond calmly and consistently.

Sanctions

Many incidents of bullying can be dealt with effectively without the use of sanctions. However, if necessary, sanctions should be applied to protect a student who is the victim of persistent bullying. These sanctions include:

- Referral to the Home/School Liaison Officer.
- Referral to senior management.
- Formal warnings.
- Contacting parents/carers.
- Detentions.
- Placement in the Learning Support Unit.
- Internal exclusions.
- Exclusions (fixed and permanent).

Responding to Racist Incidents

Racist behaviour can be defined as anything intended to cause hurt or distress where the motivation is racial distress or hatred, or behaviour based on prejudice against any racial group.



All racist incidents should be taken seriously, although they may vary in the degree of hostility. Some incidents such as name calling and telling jokes may seem trivial but they still express offensive racist attitudes which attack the individual's self respect. Some victims may not want to draw attention to themselves by pursuing the matter because they are scared, so staff need to be vigilant. Incidents which appear trivial in themselves can rapidly become serious and frightening once they begin to accumulate and intensify so it is important that action is taken at the earliest possible opportunity.

Racist graffiti or slogans, whether on books or walls, should be removed immediately on discovery. Racist literature, badges or insignia should be confiscated on discovery, and the reasons for not allowing them should be explained.

Staff Action

- Ensure that the victim is given appropriate support.
- Inform the designated senior member of staff.
- Record all details relating to the racist incident using form R.I.1 (file in staffroom).
- Ensure that all the perpetrators are aware of the seriousness of their actions and are given counselling if necessary.
- Inform parents/carers when students are involved in racist incidents as either victims or perpetrators.
- Students responsible for racist behaviour will be dealt with through the school's disciplinary procedures. Sanctions will depend on the severity of the incident but may include:
 - Requesting an apology.
 - Counselling.
 - A meeting with the perpetrator's parent/carer.
 - Informing the police.
 - Formal warning.
 - Placement in the Learning Support Unit.
 - Internal exclusion.
 - Exclusion (fixed term or permanent).

Support for Victims

Any language or behaviour that hurts or offends must be addressed in order to develop a positive ethos in the school.

- Incidents should be dealt with sensitively.
- The victim should be informed of the action taken and the attitude of the school towards such behaviour should be properly explained to them.
- In the case of serious or persistent incidents, the Headteacher or senior member of staff responsible for the school's anti-bullying policy should consider writing to, or meeting with, the parent/carer of the victim to explain the action taken and discussing the matter with them.

Useful Agencies



- Childline: helpline: 0800 1111 (open 24 hours a day)
- Kidscape: helpline: 0207 730 3300
- www.bullying.org

Dealing with Homophobic Incidents

A homophobic incident is any incident perceived to be homophobic by the victim or another person. Such incidents can be directed against both heterosexual and same-sex attracted people and can affect students, staff and parents/carers. The most common forms of homophobic incidents in school are:

- Name calling.
- Ridicule.
- Graffiti.
- Hitting/kicking.
- Rumour mongering.
- Teasing.
- Frightening look/stare.
- Belongings taken.
- Social isolation.
- Sexual assault.

It is the school's aim to establish a whole school climate in which diversity is valued and where homophobic language, as well as other abusive language, is not tolerated. The school has procedures for recording homophobic incidents and these procedures are explained to all new staff. The school ensures that there are opportunities in the curriculum for learning about sexual orientation, addressing prejudice and promoting social justice.

Responding to Disclosures

For a student to speak about his or her sexuality can be a traumatic and, at the same time, therapeutic experience. A student will often carefully select the person they disclose to and the response of this person is critical to the well-being of the student. Staff, therefore, need to be aware of their roles and be sensitive to the dilemma the student may be experiencing. Staff should:

- Outline that absolute confidentiality cannot be promised if there are child protection concerns.
- Avoid being judgemental and reassure the student that there is nothing wrong with their sexuality.
- Offer them the opportunity to talk about their feelings with you and another appropriate person.
- Offer information about local sources of specialist support and advice.
- Follow child protection procedures immediately if there is evidence or suspicion of sexual abuse.



- Do not contact the parents/carers without the consent of the young person and without careful planning of how they will be informed.

School Responses to Homophobic Bullying

As with incidents of racism, all incidents of homophobic bullying should be reported to the designated senior member of staff and details entered in the appropriate file (kept in staffroom). The sanctions imposed on students responsible for homophobic bullying will depend on the nature and severity of the incident. These may include:

- Detentions.
- Parental contact.
- Counselling.
- Verbal warnings.
- Placement in the Learning Support Unit.
- Internal exclusion.
- Fixed term exclusion.
- Permanent exclusion (in severe and repeated cases).
- Placement on report.
- Movement up the school's disciplinary step system.

Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying is when a person, or a group of people, uses the internet, mobile phones or other digital technologies to threaten, tease or abuse someone. It is against the law to bully someone in this way, and if someone is being mean or threatening action should be taken to stop them.

There are lots of ways cyber bullies can target someone, including:

- Email - sending abusive emails to someone, or to a group of people, who may then join in the bullying. Sending inappropriate videos and other content or computer viruses by email.
- Instant messaging and chat rooms - using instant messaging and chat rooms to send threatening or abusive messages to someone and asking others to join in. Using another person's account to send abusive messages to others without their permission.
- Social networking sites - creating fake profiles for people or leaving abusive messages on existing profiles for other people to see.
- Mobile phone - sending abusive texts, video or photo messages, as well as sharing videos of physical attacks on individuals (happy slapping or blue jacking etc).
- Abusing personal information - posting photos, personal information or fake comments and blogs on websites where they can be seen by anyone without the person's permission.



Guidelines for Staff

Although cyber bullying cannot physically hurt a student, it can still make him/her feel bad and is a form of emotional abuse. No one has the right to make student feel like this. It is important to reassure the student that there are things that can be done to prevent it from happening:

- Encourage the student to speak to someone they can trust. If you are that person, reassure the victim by telling him/her that something will be done to improve the situation.
- Tell the student not to reply to any messages, as this may encourage the bullies.
- Tell the student to keep a copy of the abusive emails, texts or messages.
- Inform the student that he/she must never give out any personal details on the internet such as a real name, address, age or phone number. Even telling someone in school could help another person to find out information about them.
- Tell the student to change online nicknames or user ID to something different.
- Also, tell the student to block email addresses and/ or complain to host website.

Most cyber bullying takes place via a mobile phone. It is now quite easy for mobile phone companies to trace the identity of anyone who is sending nasty or abusive text messages. If a student is being bullied and receiving nasty or threatening message on their mobile, encourage the student to tell their parents/carers, who can help by reporting it to the police.

All UK mobile companies are used to dealing with nuisance calls and have people on hand to deal with this sort of problem. The companies advise young people to:

- Avoid replying to any nasty messages received.
- Keep the messages that have been sent so they can be shown to someone.
- Ignore any calls that are from a withheld number, or from a number they do not recognise.
- Change their mobile number and only give the new number out to close friends.
- Inform the police if the bullying continues.

Mobile phone operators cannot bar a particular number from contacting another phone, but this can be done on some handsets. A victim of cyber bullying should check the phone user guide to see if this is possible.

