

Technical learning with local professional partners

QEStudio

Policy Documents

Anti-Bullying Policy

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Introduction

Every member of QEstudio has the right to feel secure and happy in school and on journeys to and from school.

Every member of QEstudio has the right to an equal opportunity to education, free from any form of bullying.

Core QEstudio values on which this policy is based are as follows:

- Respecting the past and its traditions
- Working hard and doing your best
- Being decent to others
- Being polite, friendly and courteous
- Looking out for others
- Getting involved
- Respecting the environment
- Thinking of others less fortunate
- Remembering that life is about more than money and material things
- Encouraging global citizenship

This policy needs to be read in conjunction with the Professional Conduct (Behaviour) Policy.

Definition of Bullying

1. Wilful behaviour which threatens the security and happiness of another member or members of the school.
2. This may take the form of:
 - a) physical abuse
 - b) verbal abuse
 - c) rude gestures
 - d) extortion
 - e) threatening or intimidating behaviour
 - f) abuse of students with Special Educational Needs or disabilities
 - g) psychological pressure
 - h) harassment
 - i) racist comments
 - j) sexual molestation
 - k) the use of homophobic language
3. It may involve individuals or groups bullying other individuals or groups.
4. It takes place regularly over a short or long time span.
5. It may be taking place out of school.
6. It is carried out by those in a position of power over those who are powerless to resist and is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone else.
7. It is premeditated and usually forms a pattern of behaviour.
8. It may involve forms of technology eg mobile phones or social media. (See section on cyber bullying)
9. The school reserves the right to determine an occurrence or series of occurrences as 'bullying' and to deal with the matter appropriately according to the anti-bullying policy.
10. Where appropriate the expression "failing to be decent to other people" is used rather than the word "bullying" in order to escape some of the unhelpful connotations that arise from the use of the term and to connect the issue to the school's values.

Cyber bullying

The Anti-Bullying Alliance has identified 8 types of cyber bullying:

1. **Flaming** (online fights using abusive and vulgar language)
2. **Harassment** (anonymous sending of nasty, mean and insulting messages)
3. **Denigration** (damaging someone's reputation on line)
4. **Impersonation** (pretending to be someone else on line in order to get them into trouble or into conflict with others)
5. **Outing** (sharing someone's secrets or publishing embarrassing information about them, including images)
6. **Exclusion** (intentionally excluding someone from an online group)
7. **Cyberstalking** (repeated, intense harassment that induces fear)
8. **Cyberthreats** (either direct threats or the sending of distressing material)

We would respond to any of these activities as bullying and use the approaches outlined in this policy, asking parents to monitor and intervene at home.

Aims of the Policy

1. To prevent bullying.
2. To deal promptly and positively with any incident of bullying.
3. To become a "telling" school, actively encouraging students to disclose incidents of bullying, promoting awareness that silence and secrecy nurture bullying.
4. To build an anti-bullying climate encouraging an atmosphere of trust in which students feel confident to disclose bullying and understand the need for prompt and appropriate action.
5. To support victims.
6. To support students who have been involved in bullying behaviour and encourage co-operative behaviour, helping them to deal with any feelings of fear and inadequacy and encouraging them to understand the feelings of others.
7. To develop a consistent framework in which staff can respond confidently to victims and bullies.
8. To involve parents in understanding the school approach to the prevention of bullying.
9. To encourage socially acceptable behaviour and develop understanding of the range of behaviours which cause distress to others and which prevents students achieving fully in their school work. These include on line behaviours.

Prevention of Bullying

1. Awareness of the nature of bullying is increased through assemblies, CREATE team meetings and other relevant areas of the curriculum, and also through appropriate displays of work, leaflets and posters.
2. All students are encouraged to take responsibility for recognising and ending the bullying of others.
3. The Behaviour Policy promotes the need for a positive and respectful atmosphere.
4. The Code of Conduct for ICT (Acceptable Use Policy or AUP) encourages students to stay safe, keep passwords private and use school email responsibly.
5. All students entering the school in are made aware of the school's commitment to core values at the Open Evening and the New Entrants' Induction workshops with parents. They are also advised about e-safety.
6. Levels of supervision of students before school and at breaks will continue to be monitored.
7. Sixth formers will continue to alert staff to any problems during journeys to and from school.
8. Staff training will continue to develop positive management of pupil behaviour.
9. New staff discuss the policy and the school's values as part of their induction.
10. Support staff are informed of the values by their line manager and asked to report any incidents they see or concerns they may have about any undermining of the values to a senior member of staff.
11. Consideration is given to the different areas of school to promote a calm and pleasant atmosphere which discourages bullying activity
 - a) The landscaping project provides improved social areas and seating for picnics
 - b) Student voice forums advise on issues that need to be addressed concerning site and activities
12. 'Safe havens' are found for vulnerable students.
13. Student Forums are encouraged to discuss bullying related issues.
14. Students have opportunities to discuss bullying worries with the Police Community Support Officer , who has a weekly drop- in session, the three School Counsellors, the PSA as well as with school staff.
15. The Helplines page in the Student Planner gives the telephone number of Childline and other sources of confidential help outside the school
16. Parents are invited to workshops on e-safety and encouraged to contact us immediately if they have concerns about any forms of bullying or if their child appears unhappy or unsettled in any way.
17. Employers are given advice about what to do if they suspect that a child is at all unhappy or may be being bullied/ bullying others.

Dealing with Reports of Bullying

1. Disclosure

- a) Students can ask a friend to tell a teacher, can tell a teacher, member of the support staff, Learning Coach or Pastoral leader themselves. They can also ask their parents to tell someone at school. They can talk to the PCSO, the PSA or the School Counsellors.
- b) Opportunities for students to disclose information about bullying experienced or witnessed are provided by:
 - questionnaires/surveys conducted by staff or students
 - presentations by students
 - encouragement of open discussions in class about bullying

2. Procedures in School

- a) All reports of bullying are dealt with sympathetically by any member of staff and investigated with the Learning Coach and Pastoral Leads.
- b) The Principal is informed of all reports of bullying.
- c) Each disclosure is logged with all relevant information and follow-up details and placed in the main file of each pupil involved. The Principal keeps a log of all bullying incidents that we become aware of, and how we responded to them.
- d) We will provide support to students who are bullied.
 - We will reassure them that it was right to report the incident
 - We will discuss with them how the matter may be resolved
 - We will discuss strategies for staying safe
 - We will ask them to report any further incidents
 - We will assure them that the bullying will be stopped
 - We will ask them to talk to their parents about what has happened(See Appendix 1 – FAQ's)
- e) The Pastoral leads will normally interview all students involved, including witnesses, individually or together, as appropriate. Learning Coaches may also be involved in interviewing. Students write an account of their involvement. The victim is always interviewed separately initially.
- f) Other strategies will be considered. Where appropriate the 'No Blame', Circle Time or other joint problem-solving approaches will be used rather than the interview procedure.
- g) The Special Educational Needs Coordinator is involved with advising on dealing with bullying in many cases and always when students with Special Educational Needs are involved in bullying incidents.
- h) We will contact parents to discuss what has happened and strategies for resolving the situation.

- i) If it becomes apparent after careful investigation and consideration that a pupil's reports of bullying are unfounded or based on misconception the pupil will be supported and counselled as appropriate and parents involved.
- j) There will be certain occasions when an extended investigation is unhelpful and a problem solving approach is judged to be more effective.
- k) A buddy or peer mentor may be assigned. Assertiveness training may be offered

3. Actions/Sanctions

- a) Appropriate action and sanctions will be determined by the Pastoral leads and the Principal, together with any other staff involved and in consultation with the Principal. Outside agencies will be consulted if appropriate. The sanctions will range from counselling to permanent exclusion.
- b) In serious cases the Principal will exclude a pupil for a fixed term initially. On return to school the pupil will be given support and counselling. This may involve submitting an Early Help Assessment in order to access help from specialist agencies. In some cases a Restorative Justice conference can be used to help all parties to move on.
- c) In proven cases, parents of both victims and bullies will be informed of the incident and action taken. Parents will always be welcome in school to discuss incidents of bullying.
- d) The victim and the pupil who has bullied will be monitored to check that there has been no recurrence of the behaviour. We will do this after two weeks and again within the following half term. The outcome of each enquiry will be logged for the main file.
- e) When support, counselling and sanctions fail to prevent bullying behaviour the Principal may decide that permanent exclusion is the only way to proceed to protect the victim(s) or others in the school community.
- f) If the bullying has taken place on the school bus the transport company may be involved. QESudio will issue an Acceptable Behaviour Contract for the bus signed by student, parent and school representative. Continued unacceptable behaviour can sometimes result in an exclusion from the bus. In those cases parents are responsible for getting their child to school.
- g) If the bullying has taken place out of school parents may be advised to contact the police.
- h) In the case of cyber bullying parents may be advised to contact the website or report the matter through the CEOPS website or given help with monitoring their child's on-line behaviour.
- i) The Local Governing Body reserve the right to add to the list of ways in which bullying may be considered to have been carried out, if at any time an incident clearly is within the range of behaviours which threaten the security and happiness of other students and fulfils the criteria normally associated with bullying albeit via different means.

Roles and Responsibilities

1. Everyone in school is expected to
 - a) Act in a respectful and supportive way towards one another at all times, including when on line
 - b) Adhere to and promote the objectives of this policy, including on line
2. Students are expected to
 - a) Report all incidents of bullying and suspected incidents which other students may be afraid to report
 - b) Support each other and seek help to ensure that everyone feels safe, and nobody feels excluded or afraid in school or online
3. Parents can help by
 - a) Supporting our anti-bullying policy and procedures
 - b) Letting us know of any concerns about bullying that their child might have
 - c) Helping to establish an anti-bullying culture outside school
 - d) Making themselves aware of e-safety issues, monitoring their child's on-line activities and phone use and adhering to our Acceptable User Policy.

See our FAQs in Appendix 1 for further guidance.

Monitoring

1. Regular discussions at Learning Coach meetings as cases arise and informed discussion between staff.
2. Parents are asked to keep us informed if problems continue.
3. The policy is reviewed on a regular basis and amended as necessary to reflect any changes in practice.
4. The outcomes of questionnaires on bullying are discussed at Pastoral Team and Leadership meetings.
5. The PCSO, school counsellors and PSA are asked to alert us to any problems.
6. Employers are asked to alert us to any problems.

Evaluation

1. Create team session checks/questionnaires will be used regularly to determine students' understanding of bullying issues and appropriate responses.
2. Discussions at Pastoral Leads' meetings allow us to assess whether sufficient check is being kept on bullying and whether new strategies or temporary increased action are needed.
3. The bullying log is checked with Pastoral Leads annually.
4. Bullying is included in the Governors' Community Committee annual objectives.

Appendix 1: Bullying FAQ's

My child is being bullied. What can I do?

Try to stay calm and let school know at the first opportunity. A phone call to the mobile of the pastoral team is the best thing to do. Even though they're busy they'll try to get back to you that day if you tell the office staff it's a call about bullying. If you don't hear from them within 24 hours then get in touch with school again and ask to speak to Mrs Wilkinson or Mrs Harrison. We assure you we will deal with your concerns as soon as possible.

But my child is frightened it'll make things worse – should I still call?

Absolutely! One thing's for sure: it's not going to get any better if you don't tell us. It's extremely unlikely that things will escalate once we've got involved. We can usually call a halt to what's going on immediately and keep vulnerable children safe during investigations and their aftermath.

Would it help if I approach the child doing the bullying or their parents?

No. Sorting out situations like this really is something best left to schools. You are feeling anxious – possibly angry – and the parents of the child accused of bullying will be at least uncomfortable but will probably be experiencing emotions as strong as yours. It's better for you and your child to let school professionals try to investigate and resolve the issue. It will certainly lead to a more rapid and permanent solution if you leave it to us. Sometimes these encounters can get out of hand and in extreme cases parents can end up talking to the police about their own conduct and nobody wants that!

The same advice applies to text messages, phone calls or social networking: sometimes parents of children experiencing cyberbullying retaliate by sending texts, e mails or getting involved in communications on sites like Facebook. It rarely helps resolve things: in the vast majority of cases it just creates a headache for us when we're trying to unpick what is invariably a complex and delicate situation.

In all cases, collect the evidence of inappropriate communication by making notes if the bullying's face to face or simply saving and/or printing out the evidence of cyberbullying.

What should I do if I continue to have concerns after reporting the problem?

Keep in touch with us and let us know. Please don't think that we haven't done anything. We will be doing everything we can to resolve things. The problem is that in some cases the solution is a long term process and there's a lot of intervention work to do with children who are causing other children problems. Occasionally parents report incidents to the police at this stage but we'd have to advise that this is something that should only happen as a last resort when all else fails and when school and you agree that is the only option left. In the vast majority of bullying cases reported to the police the police satisfy themselves that school are dealing appropriately with the issue and leave the matter to us. That's not to say that there will never be an occasion when the severity of the threat to a child warrants police intervention but be assured they are extremely rare.

I want the children who've hurt my child to be severely punished. Do I have a say in what happens to them?

This is a really tricky one! We totally understand that as a parent your natural instinct is to protect your child and part of that instinct can lead to strong feelings of antipathy towards the children who've behaved badly towards them. We agree that behaviour that makes another child feel unhappy in any way is not to be condoned ...and we don't condone it. However, we will insist on upholding our commitment to ALL children that whilst we might disapprove of their behaviours, we will still care about them and respect them as young people who are still learning and making mistakes. Our usual sanction IS fixed term exclusion but we do use other responses e.g. community service or restorative justice conferences if we feel that those responses are more appropriate and we always follow up a sanction with work to reintegrate children into the community in a way that allows them to learn from their mistakes and move on positively. We're afraid that the preferred punishment of public humiliation before the whole school – often requested by distressed parents - is not an option therefore!

Bullying is very rarely a clear cut issue: the situations we look into are usually a tangled web of misunderstandings, anxieties, insecurities and needs, all of which take some careful unpicking and treating if we going to be effective in stopping the behaviours causing distress. We don't tolerate bullying, but we're not in the business of demonising children either.

How can I support my child when they've been bullied?

Reassure them that telling is the right thing. We have a telling culture at QESudio: it's part of our school value of Looking Out For One Another and everyone has the right to speak up if they're unhappy about something. We have little time for the argument about not "dobbing" people in - it's not in anyone's thinking here.

Don't tell them to stand up for themselves or to fight back either. That escalates things and puts them at risk of course. It's much easier to get a satisfactory outcome if you and your child have not compromised your position by causing any harm or distress to others.

Work with us on ways to make your child feel better. Try not to let your child hear or detect your distress or anger. They will pick up on that and it will worry them. Be clear with them that bullying is unacceptable behaviour and that telling is the right thing to do and that the best way to solve the problem is to work with you and school to stop it. Try your best not to call the other children names or say angry things about them in front of your child as this may well increase their fear and anxiety.

Whilst a child who has been bullied will certainly need some TLC from us all, this needs to be accompanied by lots of encouragement to put unpleasantness behind them and get back to normal, safe in the knowledge that the problems are being dealt with and that they can get help and support whenever they need it. Empower them in other words.