



# MARLBOROUGH COLLEGE MALAYSIA

## COUNTERING BULLYING POLICY

### **Aims and Objectives**

This policy is based on the principle that all members of the College community have the right to enjoy their lives in a safe and caring environment, free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment such that all pupils can develop to their full potential.

The strong expectation exists that the community is based upon mutual respect, courtesy, fairness and compassion. This expectation is reinforced both by the actions and responsibilities of the adults and senior pupils within the community, and also by our documentation.

We expect pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed, but orderly, atmosphere. We expect pupils to care for and support each other, as well as to develop regard for others in the wider community.

Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting the College in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that the College and families have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together. Acceptance of this policy forms part of our standard terms and conditions. This policy is available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils on the College website.

Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the school. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable – the College accepts that bullying can cause significant damage to a victim's ability to thrive in a number of regards, including physically, emotionally, psychologically and socially. This policy applies to all day and boarding pupils in the school.

### **Bullying Statement**

Marlborough College pupils in the Senior and Prep Schools formed a committee in the first term of opening to develop statements setting out the College's expectations [see Appendix]. These are found on House Notice Boards and in classrooms.

The right of all members of the College to enjoy their lives free of bullying and harassment is asserted, as is the expectation to treat others as members hope to be treated themselves, in an atmosphere of mutual respect, and to act to show disapproval of bullying.

This Policy accepts that bullying can take many forms and use many different means:

- Different forms of bullying include racial, religious, cultural, sexual/sexist, homophobic or gender orientation, special educational needs and disability, or bullying based on physical difference (such as body shape).
- Different means of bullying include physical (including sexual); verbal (spoken and written, via any means); emotional bullying (including exclusion, use of silence, the formation of cliques, spreading rumours); cyber-bullying (including via texting, social networking sites, mobile phones, digital media, email, camera-enabled devices, image sharing sites such as YouTube or Flickr).
- It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation.
- Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time and can involve everyone - pupils, other young people, staff and parents. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidatory.

### **The College's Response to Bullying**

It is the right of any individual who feels bullied or intimidated to expect any senior member of the College – pupil or member of staff – to listen and to deal with the problem promptly and sensitively is asserted.

The College will always treat bullying, including allegations of bullying, seriously and believes that to do nothing is to condone bullying. Bullying is in direct contradiction of the Pastoral Aims and general ethos.

The College is committed to dealing with examples of pupil unkindness in such a way as to make bullying, as defined above, less likely.

This is based on the following beliefs:

- That pupils will respond to the clearly articulated expectation to be kind, but that this might need reinforcement and practical explanation, especially for younger pupils;
- That sometimes it might not be an intention to cause distress and hurt, but that this is the consequence of a pupil's actions;
- That the line between "banter" and bullying behaviour can be misunderstood by pupils on both the giving and receiving end, and that resolving this can be a matter of education, rather than punishment;
- That education about positive behaviour and the prevention of bullying is preferable to stringent, "one size fits all" disciplinary sanction;
- That bullying can be an emotive issue for pupils, parents and staff, and that by acting promptly to demonstrate disapproval of unkindness there is less likelihood of repetition such that bullying behaviour develops;
- That a "speaking out" culture is desirable, and that pupils should be encouraged to tell if they have been upset or hurt by others in the community; that this is easier, sometimes, than alleging that bullying has taken place;
- That acting against unkindness and promoting modified behaviour retain the goodwill of both victims and potential bullies, a defensive reaction is less likely, and the possibility of retaliation is reduced.

Any member of staff may pick up issues of unkindness and bullying from pupils. Thus the College's first response must be to offer a pupil who feels bullied assurance of support and safety, and of full access to the pastoral support of the school. The Heads of School and Deputy Heads should always be informed.

HMs, Section Heads and tutors will always pass on information about allegations of bullying, from whatever quarter, to the Heads of school and Deputy Heads, promptly and directly. This enables a consistent and

coordinated disciplinary response, as appropriate, while retaining the ability to deal with instances of bullying on a case-by-case basis.

It also enables the Heads of School and Deputy Heads to maintain a record of all instances where the College has dealt with unkindness and bullying between pupils, such that patterns can be observed and monitored.

### **Response to Alleged Unkindness (one-off event)**

#### *Stage 1 – Informal Resolution*

A clear indication of what has been alleged, including details of time and place, will be recorded. Any adult with whom the victim feels comfortable may take this record but ideally the Tutor, Class teacher, Section Head, HM, Deputy Head or Head of School would be involved. In the first instance, class teachers, individual HMs, Deputy Heads or Heads of School will talk to pupils, with the emphasis on education and resolution.

Depending on the circumstances, it may be that the following outcomes are sought and acceptable:

- Raised awareness of unintentional distress or hurt caused, resulting in modified future behaviour;
- Acknowledgement of intentional distress or hurt caused, resulting in modified behaviour;
- An offer of genuine apology, either verbally or in writing, by the perpetrator and its acceptance by the victim.

#### *Stage 2 – Resolution and Warning as to Future Conduct*

As a further stage of resolution, prior to formal disciplinary sanction, it may be decided by the Head of School, Deputy Head, HM or Section Head involved that the “perpetrators” meet with them formally to discuss their actions.

The following outcomes are sought and acceptable:

- Raised awareness or acknowledgement of behaviour which can cause hurt or distress;
- Cessation of such behaviour with immediate effect;
- An offer of genuine apology, either verbally or in writing, by the perpetrator and its acceptance by the victim;
- Pupil awareness of future close scrutiny of behaviour in order to dissuade against repetition or retaliation;
- An acceptance of the seriousness of the need to avoid unkind behaviour and to demonstrate compassionate behaviour, and an acceptance that repetition is likely to be considered as bullying and would lead to disciplinary sanction.

In stages 1 and 2, while it is important to demonstrate consistency across the College, and across time, and to reinforce the College’s expectations, it is also important to be mindful of the views of the victim(s), and his or her parents, regarding the manner in which incidents are dealt with.

The Head of School, Deputy Head, HM or Section Head will keep parents of all parties informed throughout both stages, and it is likely that stage 2 will be concluded by written communication to the parents of those who had been unkind.

### **Response to Allegation of Bullying (repeated unkindness)**

### *Stage 3 – Allegation of Bullying*

An allegation of bullying will result in a disciplinary investigation carried out by the Section Head, HM, Deputy Head or Head of School. The Master will be informed and involved as the investigation progresses.

If the allegation is found to be justified, appropriate disciplinary responses may include a period of technical suspension, suspension or permanent exclusion for cases of severe and/or persistent bullying.

Regard will be paid to the individual circumstances in each case, of both victim and perpetrator, including the age of pupils; their ability to understand the consequences of their actions and to modify their behaviour; the possibility of a restorative relationship going forward, and the future safety, security and welfare of all pupils concerned. It may be necessary to draw up a welfare plan / risk assessment to support pupils concerned.

### **Indication of Bullying**

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to return to school after weekends or holidays
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet, tearful
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others
- Books, kit and other belongings suddenly go missing or are damaged
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary, appearance)
- Diminished levels of self-confidence
- Frequent visits to the Medical Centre with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches etc
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- Choosing the company of adults
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping, experiencing nightmares etc
- Talking of suicide or running away

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and pastoral staff.

### **Measures to Prevent Bullying**

The College acknowledges that taking action and having measures in place to prevent bullying from becoming a problem are desirable to relying on disciplinary responses to bullying. The following measures are in place:

#### Pastoral Support

- Pupils are made aware of the potential presence of bullying through PSHE.
- Staff are alert to possible signs of bullying and the necessity of handling any incidents as an immediate priority.
- Support and guidance is provided to staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both victims and bullies.
- In boarding houses, there are strong teams of adult tutors supporting the HMs, who act *in loco parentis*. The informal house environment is important in reinforcing a pupil's standards and values providing the

opportunity for friendly, informal discussion of matters of concern to the individual pupil outside the formal classroom.

- We encourage close contact between the Head of School, Deputy Head, HM, or Section Head and parents/guardians, and encourage contact if either party is worried about a pupil's well being.

### *Induction*

- All pupils are briefed thoroughly on the College'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.
- This briefing is followed up and reinforced throughout the year in appropriate assemblies and PSHE which explain the College's behavioural expectation in respect of kindness and against bullying and to embed expectations, to reinforce the culture of speaking out against unkindness and to provide points of contact to whom younger pupils may easily turn to discuss bullying.
- The College condemns the notion of initiation rituals or ceremonies intended to cause pain, anxiety or humiliation.

### *Training and Education*

- Our PSHE programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the school. Pupils have been involved in drawing up an Anti-Bullying Pledge, such that they collaboratively express what they understand by bullying, and what behaviour they will accept in the context of their own school communities.
- Pupils, staffs and families will receive training about bullying and digital safety. This presentation covers issues of what cyber-bullying is, how to report cyber-bullying, as well as the importance of maintaining the same standards of online behaviour as in other aspects of one's personal behaviour.
- Academic lessons will regularly highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by teaching moral values that show bullying to be unacceptable and by developing social skills.
- Annual Anti-Bullying Week.

### *Cyberbullying*

- The College asks all pupils to adhere to its Code of Conduct for the safe use of the internet, and pupils sign this code to indicate that they have read and understood its terms.
- Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our IT Department monitors pupils' use.
- The College may impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of digital technology, including the internet.
- The College issues all pupils with their own personal school email address and offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords and other personal details safe, through ICT lessons.
- The College offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying through the ICT and PSHE programme which covers blocking, removing contacts from 'friends' lists' and sharing personal data.

### *A Culture of Speaking Out*

- All pupils are encouraged to tell a member of staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place.
- The College reserves the right to investigate incidents that take place outside school terms, on school visits and trips, involving our pupils.
- The College welcomes feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures.

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## The Marlborough Anti-Bullying Pledge

Marlborough pupils will:

- **Respect others** and their property
- **Stand up** to bullies and **speak out**
- Not exclude, insult, spread rumours, hurt, vandalise

**Marlborough will not tolerate bullies**

