

Prevention of Bullying

The prevention of bullying in QEHS is part of our commitment to equal opportunities.

“QEHS will aim to ensure that no student, job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment than any other on the grounds of sex, parental/marital status, race, ethnic or national origin, religious belief, sexual orientation, age or disability”.

[from QEHS Equal Opportunities policy]

Our commitment is to:

“Create an environment where individuals are free from sexual or racial harassment and harassment of a general nature such as bullying.”

[from QEHS Equal Opportunities policy]

With specific reference to anti bullying strategies our commitment is to:

- Ensure that students are aware of the anti bullying policy in the student planner and to enlist their support in tutorials, in lessons and around the school. Our view is that it is essential that student feedback informs our work.
- Seek to bring about the situation in which students themselves actively discourage bullying and view reporting of incidents as being responsible rather than telling tales. We aim to ensure the whole school community works together towards shared goals on this issue.
- Ensure that staff are alert to the possibility of bullying taking place, e.g. Via pastoral team meeting discussions.
- Ensure that students are not left unattended in corridors or classrooms.
- Ensure that good communication is maintained when monitoring and managing bullying that is in the partnership with parents and between pastoral and subject staff.
- Whilst on duty ensure that staff are on time, that students are in allocated areas/rooms and that a positive presence is maintained. If staff know they are going to be away ensure they arrange to swap duties with someone else.
- Ensure that the teachers model non-bullying behaviour: methods of teaching and control do not endorse bullying tactics.
- Ensure that there is an emphasis on positive expectations of student behaviour.
- Ensure that staff are on time for lessons and well prepared.
- Ensure that if students or parents report bullying the report is listened to, taken seriously, and appropriate investigations made and appropriate strategies put in place.
- Following investigations the outcome is made known to those involved and the situation monitored closely following the incident, e.g. This may include daily meetings if appropriate.

- Ensure that staff moving around the school regularly check the toilets and discourage students from congregating in these areas.

Types of Bullying

There are many definitions of bullying but in almost all cases it is deliberately hurtful behaviour and is often repeated over a period of time. At QEHS we treat incidents of bullying very seriously.

There are various forms of bullying, but there are three main types.

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| Physical | - | hitting, kicking, taking other people's belongings |
| Verbal | - | name calling, teasing, insulting, threatening, including communication by mobile phone, text messaging, computer E-mail. |
| Emotional | - | being unfriendly, excluding somebody from an activity or group, tormenting, spreading rumours. Ignoring or not talking to someone or laughing at them. |

All these things affect people in different ways and each person will react differently when bullied. We believe that if a student feels intimidated or is made to feel unsafe by the words/actions of another student, then he or she is being bullied. No case brought to our attention will be viewed as unimportant.

In a school as large as QEHS it would be unrealistic to think there is no bullying. We want staff and students to see bullying as an anti-social behaviour which is unacceptable and which will not be tolerated. Within the school community we try to develop positive, civilised behaviour through good role models and the creation of a tolerant culture.

Possible signs to look for

All staff should be aware of particular signs that may indicate a student is being bullied.

Students may:

- Be frightened of walking to or from school
- Be unwilling to go to school, begin to truant from lessons
- Begin to underachieve in their school work
- Come to lessons regularly with clothes or books damaged
- Develop mystery illnesses like pains, headaches or eating problems
- Continually arrive late to lessons and/or miss registration
- Have unexplained bruises, scratches, cuts
- Have their possessions go missing.
- Ask for money or begin stealing it [to pay bullies]

- Refuse to say what is wrong or give unlikely excuses to explain problems.
- Become moody, lacking in confidence or withdrawn
- May be inexplicably aggressive and/or confrontational towards staff, parents, others.

Strategies

Staff and students need to be aware of how to deal with the isolated incidents of bullying which occur. All students are issued with information and advice about bullying and the issue is considered in tutorials. Staff discuss anti-bullying strategies in year team meetings/HOYs meetings and reflect on effectiveness of strategies used. Year heads and tutors have developed ways of finding out as much information as possible. Students are encouraged to be open and discuss their worries with a member of staff. More specific strategies include:

- Peer mentoring for both the bully and the victim. [Aim to establish a vertical year group [Yr 9-13] peer support group for bullying]. The Community Education department has set up a peer mentoring scheme in which young people receive training for their role.
- Use of the circle of friends strategy, in which students are asked to befriend the victim.
- Use of the No Blame Approach where the victim and bully are involved in discussions [together and separately] so they both gain support.
- Student discussions/meditation so that the bully can identify/empathise with the victim.
- Concerns box in Year 9.
- Very close monitoring following an initial incident e.g. Daily drop in to a year office to sign in to indicate they are safe or to indicate another incident. Incidents identified followed up immediately.
- Links with voluntary organisations to inform our work and/or to provide specific support.

Pastoral staff are involved in ongoing C.P.D. On anti-bullying strategies e.g. Attendance at courses, conferences. All new staff take part in a new staff induction programme which considers the behaviour and discipline strategies used at QEHS.

All cases of bullying are dealt with individually. A rigid set of rules would be inappropriate. Most often the information should be passed to the Year Head for action but some staff may feel they want to deal with a minor situation as it presents itself in a lesson or whilst they are on duty. Following this they would inform the student's tutor of the incident. General guidelines would be that the facts should be established, students must be interviewed, parents contacted, counselling may be offered to the bully and the victim. Both the victim and the bully need help to ensure that there is no recurrence and the situation is monitored closely for the appropriate length of time following the incident.

Sanctions may include:

- restriction of opportunities to socialise at break/lunchtime, i.e. Supervised breaks/lunch-times
- detentions, at lunchtime, after school [by prior notification]
- placing on daily reporting
- removal from parts of the timetabled curriculum for a fixed period of times

In serious cases students can expect to be excluded for a fixed term.

Monitoring/Review

We review our approach to bullying regularly. It was a major focus of our recent whole school equal opportunities survey which provided valuable feedback on bullying issues. It provided information which has fed into our student guidance programme incidents using MIDAS [software] which will further inform our work and self evaluation of our effectiveness regarding dealing with bullying issues.