Anti-Bullying

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1 Policy Statement

1.1 Embley believes that every child should be able to learn in a school environment free from bullying of any kind and in which children feel safe and supported. Every member of the community at Embley has a role in creating a culture where bullying is not tolerated. Bullying has no place in the Embley community and this applies both to the bullying of pupils and of all staff. The school is committed to taking action to reduce the risk of bullying at times and in places where it is most likely. The aim of this document is to help members of the school community deal with bullying when it occurs and, even more importantly, to prevent it.

1.2 Embley defines bullying as deliberate, repeated or systematic actions (physical, verbal, direct or indirect) which seek to harm another person and/or undermine their confidence and self-esteem and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups. The school will apply appropriate sanctions to bullying of any type: racial, sexual, cyber bullying, religious, cultural, sexist, homophobic and transphobic, adopted child, child carer, or against any type of disability and special learning needs.

1.3 This policy has regard to relevant legislation and governmental guidance with specific reference to the guidance, the spirit and requirements of the DfE document: '*Guidance – Safe to Learn: Embedding anti bullying work in schools'.* It will also provide evidence of compliance with the National Minimal Standards for Boarding Schools (2022), Standard 12: Promoting Positive Behaviour and Relationships. In addition, it has regard to current DfE Guidance - Preventing and Tackling Bullying (2017).

1.4 The school understands the seriousness of bullying: the negative effect it has on the educational experience, the likely outcome of psychological damage and, at worst, that it is a factor in pupil suicide. Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, any actions which result in criminal activity, e.g. harassment and threatening behaviour, will be reported to the police.

1.5 Embley is committed to raising awareness of staff through training so that the principles of the school are understood, legal responsibilities are known, action is defined to resolve and prevent problems, and sources of support are available for the victim and the bully.

1.6 Pupils and staff must understand that any form of bullying will lead to strong sanctions; and ultimately including exclusion, that may be necessary in cases of severe and persistent bullying.

- This policy applies to all members of our school community, including boarders and those in our EYFS setting.
- Embley is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this Anti Bullying policy is non-discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). Further details are available in the school's Equal Opportunities Policy document.
- Embley seeks to implement this policy through adherence to the procedures set out in the rest of this document.
- This document is available to all interested parties on our website and on request from the Senior or Prep School offices and should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

  Behaviour and Discipline

  Child protection (Safeguarding)

  Cyber Bullying

Exclusions, Expulsion and Removal

PSHE schemes of work

Acceptable Use of ICT and digital resources for pupils

E-Safety Policy

2 Defining bullying and anti-social behaviour

2.1 At Embley bullying is defined as repeated over time (but does not preclude action being taken for single incidents) and intentionally hurting another pupil or group physically or emotionally and often is motivated by prejudice against particular groups; for example, on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, transphobia, special educational needs and disability, or because a child is adopted or is a carer. Bullying may be a significant factor in causing severe psychological distress and damage.

Embley distinguishes friendship issues from bullying as defined above. Where friendship issues are not deemed to have met the threshold to be classed as bullying, these will be dealt with in accordance to the School's Behaviour and Discipline Policy. A formal complaint of bullying made in writing to the Headmaster, in accordance with the Complaints Policy, will be treated as a formal incident.

Bullying can take many different forms, which include:

Physical bullying should not be seen merely in terms of a pupil being physically threatened or assaulted. It can include damage done to the victim's property, clothing or schoolwork.

Verbal bullying includes name calling, sarcasm and persistent teasing.

Emotional bullying is when someone is tormented, ridiculed, or humiliated. Often the person who engages in this form of bullying does not consider it to be bullying but refers to it as a "joke". If this victim does not find teasing or taunting funny, then it is not a joke.

Indirect bullying involves spreading unpleasant stories about someone, excluding them from a social group or spreading nasty, malicious stories about them.

Racist, Religious, Cultural, Sexist, Homophobic or Transphobic bullying is when a pupil is targeted for representing a group; it is likely to hurt not only the victim but also other people in the same group; similarly, pupils who are targeted because they have a disability or a Special Educational Need, have been adopted or act as carers for a member of their family.

Sexual bullying is characterised by unwelcome remarks about appearance, inappropriate (and uninvited) touching and sexual innuendos and propositions. It can also be related to sexual orientation.
Cyber bullying is when one person or a group of people aim to threaten, tease or embarrass someone else by using a mobile phone, the internet or other technologies, such as social websites, text messages, photographs or email.

Bullying may occur directly or through cyber technology (social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and e-mail) and prejudice-based bullying because of protected characteristics. We distinguish in our records any incidents of bullying which are based on protected characteristics, which enables us to monitor our success in meeting other standards such as instilling values of tolerance and respect and actively promoting the well-being of pupils. These incidents are taken particularly seriously.
Pupils who use the internet in ways that cause harm to others and bring the name of the School into disrepute may be subject to disciplinary sanctions even if the behaviour takes place off School premises, and even if the pupils are over 18.

The seriousness of bullying cannot be emphasised enough. Bullying makes the life of a victim a misery; it undermines confidence and self-esteem and destroys their sense of security. Bullying can impact on a victim's attendance and attainment at school, marginalises those groups who may be particular targets for bullies and can have a life-long negative impact on some young people's lives. At worst bullying has been a factor in pupil suicide and causing psychological damage. The School will implement disciplinary sanctions that reflect the seriousness of an incident. Strong sanctions such as exclusion may be necessary in cases of severe and persistent bullying.

It is acknowledged that bullies may have complex reasons for their behaviour and may well need help. It should be recognised that the consequences of being allowed to "get away with it" can be detrimental to them as well as the victim. All pupils deserve the opportunity to be helped to understand what acceptable behaviour is.
Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986. If School staff feel that an offence may have been committed, they will seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.

3 Cyber bullying

3.1 Cyber bullying is when one person or a group of people aim to threaten, tease or embarrass someone else by using a mobile phone, the internet or other technologies, such as social websites, text messages, photographs or email.

3.2 With the increasing availability to children of electronic devices that give unrestricted access to the internet, Embley takes online safety as part of both its safeguarding and anti-bullying arrangements. Limitations in the provision of hardware and vigilance of teachers and parents is important in order to ensure the safeguarding and protection of pupils at school and at home. Staff at Embley understand that the best protection is in the good sense of young people in the knowledge of what is available and the risks to which they may be subject. To this end the school ensures that this policy and the approach to ICT is understood and is fully supported by staff, parents and pupils.

3.3 Most of our pupils will use mobile digital devices and computers at some time. They are a source of fun, entertainment, communication and education. However, we know that some men, women

and young people will use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails, to enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography or face-to-face meetings. The school's E-Safety Policy explains how we try to keep pupils safe in school. Cyber-bullying by pupils, via texts and emails, is treated as seriously as any other type of bullying.

3.4 Chat-rooms and social networking sites are the more obvious sources of inappropriate and harmful behaviour and pupils are not allowed to access these sites in school. Some pupils will undoubtedly be 'chatting' on mobiles or social networking sites at home.

4 Aims

4.1 To provide a safe and secure environment where all can learn and teach without anxiety.
4.2 To be proactive in reducing the risk of bullying by developing a school ethos in which bullying is unacceptable and pupils are encouraged to report bullying.
4.3 To set out a consistent, reasonable and proportionate school response to any bullying incident.
4.4 To apply appropriate disciplinary sanctions to the pupil causing the bullying.
4.5 To ensure that all members of staff take all forms of bullying seriously and intervene to prevent incidents from taking place or continuing.
4.6 To make all those connected with the School aware of its opposition to bullying, and make clear each person's responsibilities with regards the prevention of bullying.
4.7 To ensure that ways of preventing bullying are part of a regular programme in PSHE lessons and assemblies.
4.8 To safeguard and support the pupil (day or boarding) who has been bullied.
4.9 To support pupils (day or boarding) and to provide suitable help and guidance for pupils who may bully others.
4.10 To raise awareness of staff through training.
4.11 To create a community in which all treat each other with dignity and respect.
4.12 To use educational elements such as PSHE, assemblies, projects, drama, stories, literature, historical events, current affairs and so on to raise awareness, with discussion of differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice (and prejudiced-based language).
4.13 To have clear policies communicated to parents, pupils and staff, and creating an environment of good behaviour and respect, with helpful examples set by staff and older pupils and celebrations of success.
4.14 To involve parents and make sure that the pupils are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders.

5 Procedure

5.1 The centralising of information is essential in order to gain a complete picture of any interactions between pupils over a period of time. For this reason, all staff need to be aware of the sensitive nature of dealing with both bullies and those being bullied and the procedures set out in this document about reporting bullying incidents must be adhered to strictly.
5.2 If any member of staff witnesses or becomes aware of an act of bullying including cyber-bullying, they should do all they can to intervene in order to stop the bullying and support the pupil or member of staff who is being bullied. This may involve counselling and support for the victim of the bullying. Pupils who are concerned that they are becoming the victim of bullying, have seen the bullying of other pupils, or that they are becoming a bully should tell a member of staff. This may be their Tutor, Form Teacher (Prep School), Head of Year (Senior School) or any other member of staff

with whom they feel they can safely discuss their concerns. No member of staff can promise confidentiality to the pupil about any such discussions; staff should, however, confirm to pupils that their safety and welfare will be the overriding principle in any discussions.
5.3 All such pupil-initiated reporting of concerns or incidents is to be taken seriously. If faced with an incident, investigations should be instigated by talking to both bullied and bully. Records should be kept and it is recommended that such conversations should not take place between individual members of staff and individual pupils unless this is unavoidable in order to ascertain sensitively what has been happening.
5.4 Information should be shared at the earliest opportunity with the Tutor or Form Teacher so that they can instigate/continue investigations and counselling, and apply sanctions as appropriate; they will be aware of any previous incidents involving these pupils. Tutors or Form Teachers will share the information with the Head of Year (Senior School) or Head of the Prep School. All incidents must be recorded in writing.
5.5 The Head of Year in consultation with the Deputy Head (Senior School) or Head of the Prep School will decide when it is appropriate to communicate with the parents of the bullied or the bullying. Records of these parents' meetings will be kept by the Head of Year or Head of the Prep School on CPOMS.
5.6 Instances where a pupil is considered to be vulnerable must be discussed with Heads of Year or Head of the Prep School (as appropriate): information as necessary will be made available to staff at the earliest opportunity.
5.7 Heads of Year/Head of the Prep School are to keep their own detailed records of all incidents that involve pupils in their Year Group(s). All incidents must be reported to: Mrs Leah Goodey in the Senior
School and to Mrs Sheina Gibb in the Prep School so they can be placed in the schools' central records on CPOMS. These records are kept to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach adopted or to enable patterns to be identified.

5.8 Instances of bullying that take place outside school (e.g. cyber-bullying) but impact in the school environment upon those involved may be deemed to be actionable under the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.
If any member of staff is a victim of bullying, they should inform the Headmaster in writing, including the evidence.
5.9 The seriousness of bullying cannot be emphasised enough. Bullying is among the top concerns that parents and the pupils themselves have. Bullying makes the lives of its victims a misery: it can undermine their confidence, self-esteem and sense of security and can be psychologically damaging. Whist bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws that apply to harassment, assault and threatening behaviour. If staff or parents feel that an offence may have been committed they should seek assistance from the police/ children's social care.

6 Available Sanctions

- Verbal reprimand
- Contact Tutor or Form Teacher, Head of Year or/and Head of Department
- Contact with parents
- Being put on Check In Check Out (CICO) report
- Referral to the Head of Year in Senior School
- Letter to parents
- Detention

- Meeting with parents
- Referral to the Deputy Head or Head of the Prep School
- Work in isolation from peers
- Referral to the Headmaster
- Temporary or permanent exclusion

At any stage, pupils may also be requested to write letters of apology or explanation.

The school will implement disciplinary sanctions which reflect the seriousness of an incident and convey a deterrent effect.

7 Action

7.1 In the first instance, the victim must be made to feel that they have a role in deciding what steps are taken. Such empowerment can assist in the rebuilding of their self-esteem. They must be counselled that the school is there to support them, particularly if they do not wish to share information with the school for fear of the consequences. They may feel that the school has let them down and it may take some time for them to trust the school again.

7.2 Time must be spent talking to the pupil suspected of bullying in order to gain their perspective on the incident. If necessary, it must be explained why the action of the pupil was wrong and the pupil must be helped to change their behaviour in future. It is possible that their actions were not intended to offend; in such cases it must be explained that the perception of the victim is the victim's reality, no matter how the actions were intended. A clear warning must be given that there must be no repeat of this mode of behaviour.

7.3 Should there be a clearly ratified repeat of such behaviour, parents are informed and sanctions are applied in line with the seriousness of the offence. A bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern where there is a reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

7.4 Should there be any further incidents the matter is referred to the Deputy Head in the Senior School or Head of the Prep School.

7.5 At each step, careful consideration must be made of the facts and testimonies of those involved and any witnesses; incidents of bullying are often not as straightforward as they may first appear. Whilst we wish to support any vulnerable members of our community, our aim is not to apply sanctions unfairly.

8 Responsibilities

8.1 **The Headmaster, Mr Cliff Canning and the Head of Prep School Mrs Sheina Gibb** will:

- Ensure this policy is reviewed every year.
- Ensure this policy dovetails with the school's Behaviour and Discipline Policy, which includes rules, rewards, sanctions, behaviour management, the restorative approach and the encouragement of good behaviour and respect for others as well as support for the bully and the victim.
- Empower school staff to impose disciplinary penalties for inappropriate pupil behaviour.
- To an extent which is reasonable and possible, regulate the behaviour when pupils are off school site, especially in relation to cyber-bullying.

- Decide, when the nature of the bullying is strong and severe, to suspend or exclude a pupil. The Headmaster will inform the Chair of the Local Governing Body: Dr Lesley Black and Head of Independent Schools, Sir Jon Coles.
- Decide the appropriate sanction where a pupil is provoked into violent behaviour as a result of bullying. They will take into account all the available evidence and balance the needs of the pupil concerned against those of the whole school community.
- Judge if there is evidence that a criminal offence has taken place and then inform the relevant agencies: police, and the Head of Independent Schools, Mrs Fiona Boulton.
- Provide the means for relevant and appropriate training to raise awareness of bullying.
- Report to The Local Governing Body, at appropriate intervals, the effectiveness of the implementation of the policy with an analysis of bullying incidents.
- Decide appropriate action in cases where staff are the victims of bullying.

8.2 **Head of the Prep School, Mrs Sheina Gibb and Deputy Head in the Senior School, Mrs Leah Goodey** will:

- Ensure relevant and appropriate training for staff is undertaken in order to raise awareness of bullying and that the principles of the school policy are understood.
- Ensure that staff know their legal responsibilities, action is defined to resolve and prevent problems,
- Ensure the school invests (where necessary) in the support from external agencies to assist in understanding the needs of all our pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) pupils.
- Keep records of all training.
- Record implementation of any changes to strategy as a result of a complaint about the bullying of pupils.
- Engage and inform multi agency teams as necessary and appropriate.
- Raise awareness of bullying and ensure new staff have understood the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

8.3 **Heads of Year: Mr Alex Cherry, Director of Sixth Form; Mrs Yasmin Farley, Year 11 Miss Millie Stuart, Year 10; Mrs Lucy Smyth; Year 9 Miss Laura Greenwood, Year 8; Ms Olivia Williams, Year 7; and Head of the Prep School, Mrs Sheina Gibb** will:

- Have specific responsibility for anti–bullying work with in his/her year groups.
- Inform the Deputy Head of Senior School of repeated bullying incidents.
- Keep all records of communication from staff in relation to bullying incidents.
- Mrs Leah Goodey is responsible for keeping all records of bullying in the Senior School, and Mrs Sheina Gibb in the Prep School. These central records will enable patterns of bullying to be identified.
- Produce, at appropriate frequent intervals, an analysis of all bullying incidents for the Headmaster and make available these records in the event of a complaint.
- Keep records of communications with parents in relation to bullying incidents. Ensure that records are copied to the pupil's file on CPOMS.
- Demonstrate defensible decision-making in the event of complaints being made.
- Identify areas and places where bullying may take place: report to the Headmaster any action, e.g. change of procedures, to reduce these risks.

8.4 **Heads of Boarding: Isabelle McCredie and Johnathan McCredie** will:

- Ensure that this policy complies with the National Minimum Standard 12.
- Ensure that there are no 'initiation ceremonies' intended to cause pain, anxiety or humiliation.

9 The Role of Parents

9.1 Embley values highly the partnership we have with parents and this includes dealing sensitively with the concerns of parents who feel their child may be the victim of bullying or who may be a bully.

9.2 Parents should use the procedures in the Embley Complaints Policy if they wish to inform the school of any bullying incident.

9.3 Parents who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact their child's Tutor or Form Teacher immediately.

9.4 In the Senior School, Tutors will, within the same day, discuss the communication with the child's Head of Year. In the Prep School, the Form Teacher will, within the same day, discuss the communication with the Head of Prep School. No judgements will be made at this point until the matter is investigated.

9.5 Parents have a responsibility to support and act within the school's Anti-Bullying Policy, and to actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the community.

10 Appendix A - Information for parents and families

Parents and families also have an important part to play in helping the school deal with bullying and in eliminating bullying behaviour, which includes:

- name calling and nasty teasing
- threats and extortion
- physical violence
- damage to belongings
- leaving pupils out of social activities deliberately and frequently
- spreading malicious rumours
- sending hurtful or offensive emails or text messages

First, discourage your child from using bullying behaviour at home or elsewhere. Show how to resolve difficult situations without using violence or aggression.

Second, watch out for signs that your child is being bullied, or is bullying others. Parents and families are often the first to detect symptoms of bullying, though sometimes school nurses or doctors may

first suspect that a child has been bullied. Common symptoms include headaches, stomach aches, anxiety and irritability. It can be helpful to ask questions about progress and friends at school; how break times and lunchtimes are spent; and whether your child is facing problems or difficulties at school. Don't dismiss negative signs. Contact the school immediately if you are worried.

If your child has been bullied

- calmly talk to your child about it
- make a note of what your child says - particularly who was said to be involved; how often the bullying has occurred; where it happened and what has happened
- reassure your child that telling you about the bullying was the right thing to do
- explain that any further incidents should be reported to a teacher immediately
- make an appointment to see your child's form tutor
- explain to the teacher the problems your child is experiencing

Talking to teachers about bullying

- try and stay calm - bear in mind that the teacher may have no idea that your child is being bullied or may have heard conflicting accounts of an incident
- be as specific as possible about what your child says has happened - give dates, places and names of other children involved
- make a note of what action the school intends to take
- ask if there is anything you can do to help your child or the school
- stay in touch with the school - let them know if things improve as well as if problems continue

If your child is bullying other children

Many children may be involved in bullying other pupils at some time or other. Often parents are not aware. Children sometimes bully others because:

- they don't know it is wrong
- they are copying older brothers or sisters or other people in the family they admire
- they haven't learnt other, better ways of mixing with their school friends
- their friends encourage them to bully
- they are going through a difficult time and are acting out aggressive feelings

To stop your child bullying others

- talk to your child, explaining that bullying is unacceptable and makes others unhappy
- discourage other members of your family from bullying behaviour or from using aggression or force to get what they want
- show your child how to join in with other children without bullying

- make an appointment to see your child's form tutor; explain to the teacher the problems your child is experiencing; discuss with the teacher how you and the school can stop them bullying others
- regularly check with your child how things are going at school
- give your child lots of praise and encouragement when they are co-operative or kind to other people.

Organisations which can help:

Bullying Online www.bullying.co.uk

Website where pupils, parents, teachers and youth organisations will find advice and updated content on school bullying issues.

Advisory Centre for Education

www.ace-ed.org.uk

Advice line: 0808 800 5793

Free advice line for parents on all matters concerning school **Children's Legal Centre** www.childrenslegalcentre.com

Publications and legal advice for parents and carers **Kidscape** www.kidscape.org.uk

Helpline – 08451 205 204

Helpline is for the use of parents, guardians or concerned relatives and friends of bullied children.
Parentline Plus www.parentlineplus.org.uk

Free Parentline: 0808 800 2222

UK registered charity which offers support to anyone parenting a child

11 Document Information

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