CORNELIUS VERMUYDEN SCHOOL

Respect, Resilience, Responsibility

12 January 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Anti-bullying & Reporting Systems

I write this letter regarding a key issue. Everyone at The Cornelius Vermuyden School must take bullying seriously and we collectively must not tolerate bullying behaviour of any kind. We aim to prevent bullying by developing a safe and supportive environment in which all students can feel secure. We encourage all students to tell an adult if they are being bullied. Students, parents and carers should understand that reporting bullying is essential and be assured that the school will support them fully when bullying is reported.

Bullying includes being teased about race, religion, culture, disability, social class, gender, sexuality, personal differences, performance at school or any other matter.

What is bullying?

Bullying is defined as the repetitive, intentional harming of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying is, therefore deliberately hurtful; repeated, often over a period of time; difficult to defend against. The term bullying is therefore not appropriate when describing one off incidents, accidents, incidents without intent or friendship fallouts.

'Bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone else'.

There are different types of bullying:-

- **Psychological** (being excluded from groups, rumours, etc.)
- **Cyber** (abusive text messages, internet messages, etc.)
- **Verbal** (threats, name calling, racism, homophobia, etc.)
- **Physical** (punching, kicking, scratching, pushing, throwing objects at someone, etc.)

Bullying invariably undermines self-confidence and initiative and can create a cycle of poor performance and further criticism, potentially causing depression, stress, mental or physical ill-health, with consequent absence from school.

Some forms of bullying may break the law and may be reported to the police by the school:-

- Violence or assault;
- Theft;
- Repeated harassment or intimidation, e.g. name calling, threats and abusive phone calls, emails or text messages, sexual harassment and peer on peer abuse;
- Hate crimes – any incident which the victim, or anyone else, thinks is based on someone's prejudice towards them because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or because they are transgender.

Cornelius Vermuyden School | Dinant Avenue | Canvey Island | Essex | SS8 9QS
Tel: 01268 685011 | Email: admin@corneliusvermuyden.com | www.corneliusvermuyden.com
Headteacher: Mr I Hockey BA Hons MSc NPQH NPQEL

Cornelius Vermuyden School is a Limited Company registered in England and Wales under Company Number 8667123
Registered Office: Cornelius Vermuyden School | Dinant Avenue | Canvey Island | Essex | SS8 9QS - Cornelius Vermuyden School is an exempt Charity under the Charities Act 2011

Anti-Bullying Week (November 2023)

As part of anti-bullying week, the school completed a whole school audit of bullying, reporting and safety where 92% of students on those on roll completed the audit.

Sadly, 28% of students stated that they had recently witnessed unkind, bullying, homophobic or racist behaviour in school recently from one child to another. This is clearly unacceptable.

Just as concerning, 68% of students who witnessed such unacceptable behaviour did not report it.

Safeguarding Students: Never Acceptable

On Wednesday 17 January 2024, the school will launch a new 'Never Acceptable' approach to bullying and reporting.

When young people are subjected to behaviour such as verbal or physical abuse, harassment and assault, it is **never acceptable.** We have a collective responsibility as education leaders to take a stand. Our whole community is committed to educating adults and students about sexual harassment, sexual abuse, discrimination, misogyny and child on child abuse. We all need to ensure these issues are brought out in the open and, when reported, dealt with swiftly and anyone affected fully supported.

New Reporting Systems

From Wednesday 17 January 2024, the school will implement a range of new reporting systems to enable the reporting of never acceptable behaviours by stakeholders. These five ways will hopefully optimise the opportunity for students to be able to report.

1. Safeguarding Students: Never Acceptable Form (Hard Copy)

A copy of this form can be obtained by students and parents/carers from main Reception, the Safeguarding Office, the Gallery or their child's Head of Year or Tutor. For reference, a copy of this form is enclosed as part of this communication.

This form should be completed and handed into Reception. Upon receipt, the school will investigate accordingly, provide appropriate support for the victim (where required) and take appropriate action to mitigate the risk of this behaviour repeating.

2. Safeguarding Students: Never Acceptable Form (Electronic Copy)

A copy of the form will be emailed to all parents/carers. If required, parents/carers may print off a copy of the form, complete it and hand it in to Reception.

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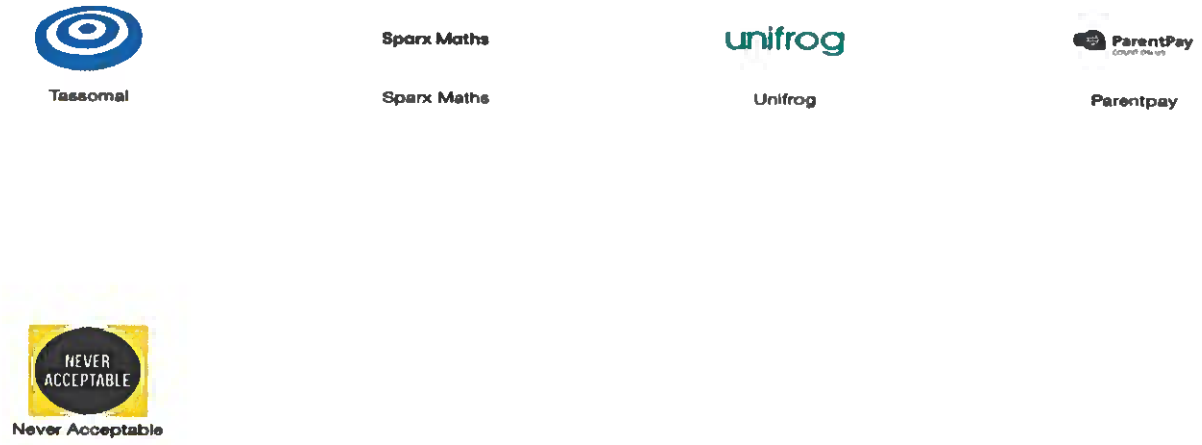
3. Safeguarding Students: Never Acceptable Form (Student Edulink Version)

Students should open and log into their Edulink account. Students should then click on the 'links' option. Once opened, students will find five links (see picture below). The link marked 'Never Acceptable Form' is an electronic version of the form. This can be opened, completed and submitted online. Designated senior leaders will receive copies of completed forms directly once submitted.



4. Safeguarding Students: Never Acceptable Form (Parent/Carer Edulink Version)

Parents/Carers should open and log into their Edulink account. Identical to that above, parents/carers will have access to any online form that can be completed and submitted.

5. Anonymous Reporting (Via the School's Website)

We appreciate that sharing things that might be upsetting is not always an easy thing to do, however, to encourage students/parents/carers to come forward to report never acceptable behaviours, we have also created an anonymous online reporting system.

This will be found at:

- http://www.corneliusvermuyden.com/
- Student Tab
- Report an incident – this will link to 'Whisper', an anonymous third-party service.

This will be available when we launch and might not be visible until next week.

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It is hoped that these five methods of reporting never acceptable behaviour will enable the school to act more swiftly when students are acting inappropriately and support those victims appropriately.

Please would all parents/carers ensure that these methods of reporting are discussed with their child.

Promotion

These new methods of reporting will be shared with all students during assemblies on 17 January 2024. Additionally, all new forms will be displayed alongside anti-bullying messages on every electronic screen around the school with immediate effect.

The school will engage with professional organisations, such as Stonewall and EDIQM, to arrange guest speakers to discuss with students about bullying, discrimination, sexuality and understanding difference.

Behaviour Contracts – Never Acceptable Behaviour

Whilst we understand that improved reporting systems will enable staff to take swifter and more decisive action against never acceptable behaviour, we understand that we will not eradicate this behaviour immediately. For a safer and kinder environment we need the support of students and parents/carers.

Following our recent work with the local authority over anti-bullying strategies, we will adopt their suggested action of the implementation of behaviour contracts where never acceptable behaviour has been displayed.

For parental/carer transparency, attached is a copy of a blank behaviour contract which may be used or adapted depending on circumstance.

I thank parents/carers in advance for their continued backing and support over addressing a key area.

Yours sincerely

Mr I Hockey
Headteacher

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Safeguarding Students: Never Acceptable

When young people are subjected to behaviour such as verbal or physical abuse, harassment and assault, it is **NEVER ACCEPTABLE**. We have a collective responsibility as education leaders to take a stand. Our whole community is committed to educating adults and students about sexual harassment, discrimination, sexual abuse, misogyny and child on child abuse. We all need to ensure that these issues are brought out in the open and, when reported, dealt with swiftly and anyone affected fully supported.

Student Name:		Form:	
Is this the first time you have used a 'Never Acceptable' form to report an incident? **Yes** [ ] **No** [ ]		Date:	

Is this the first time you have reported about this person or issue? **Yes** [ ] **No** [ ]

Describe **what** happened/what is happening:

When did it happen/when does it happen? (Please give times and dates where possible)

Where did it happen/where does it happen?

[ ]Outside of school
[ ]On the way to School
[ ]In a lesson or in lessons
[ ]On the MUGA/field
[ ]On The Street/corridor
[ ]Online or via phone
[ ]Extra-curricular club/event/trip
[ ] Other: _____

Other details about WHERE it happened/happens:
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Who is the victim of the incident?
[ ] **Me**
[ ] **My friend** – If ticked, please give their name here: _____
[ ] **Someone else** – If ticked, please give their name here: _____

Who is person committing the unacceptable behaviour?

_____

If more than one person please write all names here:
_____
_____

(If you don't know their name, please describe the person in as much detail as possible)

_____
_____
_____
_____

Did anyone else witness the incident taking place? [ ] **YES** [ ] **NO** [ ] **UNSURE**	If YES, please list their names here: _____ _____
Was anyone physically hurt or injured? [ ] **YES** [ ] **NO** [ ] **UNSURE**	If YES, please give details here: _____ _____
Was there damage to anyone's personal property? [ ] **YES** [ ] **NO** [ ] **UNSURE**	If YES, please give details here: _____ _____
Have you or the victim of the incident missed school or changed your daily routine as a result of the incident(s)? [ ] **YES** [ ] **NO** [ ] **UNSURE**	If YES, please give details here: _____ _____ _____
Have you told anyone else about the incident? [ ] **YES** [ ] **NO** [ ] **UNSURE**	If YES, please list who you have told and when: _____ _____
What do you think the school should do to resolve this issue? _____ _____ _____	
Do you feel safe in school? [ ] **YES** [ ] **NO** [ ] **UNSURE**	If NO, how can we help? _____ _____
Student Signature:	**Date:**

School Use Only	**Form Received By:**	**Date:**
School Action Taken:		
Support Offered:		
Wellbeing check completed and comment (date)		

Safeguarding Students: Never Acceptable - Behaviour Contract (Bullying)

Name	
Date	
Year / Tutor group	

The purpose of this contract is to ensure that _____ understands that unacceptable behaviour of any nature towards ***…VICTIM…*** in ***Year …*** will not be tolerated. There are many forms of bullying which can be classified as:

- **Cyberbullying** (directly or indirectly) – this involves the use of the internet, a smartphone or other technology to harass, threaten, embarrass or target ***…VICTIM….*** This includes posting hurtful images, making online threats and sending hurtful emails or texts, or directing another individual to do so.
- **Verbal bullying** (directly or indirectly) – this involves any insults to belittle, demean and hurt ***…VICTIM…***
- **Sexual bullying** (directly or indirectly) – this consists of harmful and humiliating actions that target ***…VICTIM…*** sexually. Examples include sexual name-calling, crude comments, vulgar gestures, uninvited touching, sexual propositioning and pornographic materials.
- **Physical bullying** - Examples of physical bullying include kicking, hitting, punching, slapping, shoving and other physical attacks towards ***…VICTIM…***

Consequences:

Upon signing this contract, _____ understands that if they carry out any of the above actions towards ***…VICTIM…*** , then the following consequence/s may occur:-

- Fixed term suspension;
- A period in internal suspension;
- An offsite direction to another school (6/12 weeks);
- Permanent Exclusion.

In addition to this, you will uphold the school expectations:-

- Show respect to all members of the learning community.
- Refrain from using foul language in school.
- Behave respectfully, without arguing, and cooperate when a staff member gives direction or makes a request. I understand that I will be given an opportunity to voice my concerns at an appropriate time decided by the teacher.

By signing this agreement, you agree to the above terms:-

	Block name	Signature	Date
Student			
Parent			
School representative (+ Position)			