



## Anti-Bullying Policy

### Mission Statement

The school policy on anti-bullying is firmly based on our belief that all persons are sacred because each is made in the image of God and is therefore deserving of respect. The school therefore aims to develop in all members of its community a sense of reverence, respect and responsibility for self and others, and an appreciation for diversity in our multicultural society. It also aims to promote an environment in which we all feel personally valued. Bullying directly contravenes these aims and is therefore totally unacceptable.

As a school, we adopt the Anti Bullying Alliance definition of what constitutes bullying:

**'the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face- to –face or through cyberspace.'**

The school has a responsibility, in light of its aims, to strive to create a climate where bullying behaviours are not accepted by any member of the school community and where all pupils, staff and parents work towards the elimination of bullying.

To do this the school is committed towards raising awareness amongst all members of the school community of what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relation to others. It positively encourages right behaviour based on Gospel values.

It attempts to do this:

- through its transition programme for Year 6 pupils and their parents. The values of our school are clearly addressed as part of this programme and parents, pupils and staff representatives sign a Home School Agreement promising to do their best to uphold these values
- through publishing the School Code based on the values of respect for self, others and the environment in the Pupil Home Learning Planner and displaying this Code in all classrooms
- through ongoing work in Personal, Social, Religious and Health Education sessions on relationships based on respect and the importance of gracious giving and receiving. This programme includes explicit work on bullying, on valuing difference and on racism
- through the Prayer Life of the School and the use of assemblies to support members of the school community in recognising that successful relationships are Christ-centred and based on Gospel values
- through its behaviour expectations in all curriculum areas
- through the involvement of pupils at form and School Council level in discussions on bullying and solutions to it
- through the implementation of the School Code and the insistence that the values of the Code be lived out
- through its efforts to build a sense of community and to offer opportunities for responsibility through its Youth leadership programmes, charity work, fund raising activities and Form and Year responsibilities.



- through weekly evaluation of Form relationships by Form/deputy captain with Form Tutor and Head of Year.
- through careful counselling and listening to pupils and their parents, and the offer of support from a member of our Pastoral Team, our School Chaplain, Family Liaison Lead or an appropriate outside agency.
- through the use of appropriate sanctions when those parts of the School Code relating to relationships are not adhered to
- participation in Anti-Bullying week in November each year.

Our emphasis in dealing with bullying is not punitive. We recognise that pupils:

- prefer a non- sanction based response to bullying, fearing retaliation and questioning whether punishment alone would address some of the attitudes and understanding that might be behind the bullying.
- want to be fully involved in the development of the school's response to the bullying that they have experienced.
- prefer responses which are peer orientated (including peer mentoring and peer mediation) which would help them to build wider positive relationships.
- advocate for support to be a key component.

### **The role of the 'bystander' (or 'outsider')**

When exploring bullying incidents, we must ask ourselves about the roles of all pupils involved in a bullying incident: ringleader (bully), target, assistants, reinforcers, defenders and outsiders (Anti-Bullying Alliance, 2016). These roles are fluid and can change from incident to incident. We have to consider strategies to further develop positive behaviour in school and therefore increase the number of defenders.

A bystander is someone who witnesses bullying, but does nothing to try and stop it. Most young bystanders do not act maliciously, but are simply unaware of their ability to help. On the other hand, some may purposefully aggravate the situation through provoking the bully into action by laughing, cheering or momentarily joining in.

Why is bullying not reported?

Young people may not report bullying to an adult because they:

- are scared of confrontation;
- fear repercussions from the bully;
- don't know how to report it;
- do not think an adult can help;
- do not like or know the target;
- rely on someone else to intervene;
- are friends with the bully.

Bystanders play a pivotal role in preventing bullying, as bullies can only thrive in an environment that promotes secrecy. While we do not suggest young people put themselves in danger, there are some safe steps everyone can take to make a positive change.



Bystanders can prevent bullying by:

- reporting the incident to a trusted teacher or adult (this can be done anonymously);
- sticking up for the target through disagreeing with what the bully has said and making it clear that their behaviour is not acceptable;
- rallying the support of a group of peers to stand up to the bully and report the incident;
- making a special effort to include others and befriend peers who appear isolated.

It is equally important that our school and parents communicate these points explicitly to our pupils so they know that they will be supported when they make the correct decision not to 'stand by'.

### **Identification of bullying:**

Staff, and parents/carers must be vigilant to recognise any change in a student's behaviour, especially in well-established patterns of behaviour, this may be an indication of bullying. Examples of the many signs which may indicate that a child is being bullied are:

- Items of clothing, property, school work are damaged or lost more often than you would consider normal
- Frequent injuries (bruises, cuts)
- Pupil who is or becomes withdrawn and is reluctant to say why
- Pupil who appears to be continually tired (having not slept from crying or worrying)
- Educational attainment is slowly or suddenly deteriorating
- A reluctance to attend school/ truancy
- Regular complaints of feeling unwell
- Going to or from school by a different route
- Complaints of hunger (possibly indicating that dinner money has been taken)
- Money/possession going missing
- Depression – a reluctance to eat/play normally
- Moodiness/irritability
- Threats of self-harm/ suicide

Taken individually, the above may not be due to bullying, but a combination may arouse suspicion.

If a student is showing signs of any of the above, it can be an indication that the student is not happy and therefore the cause should always be investigated.

### **Statutory Obligations:**

- Under the Children's Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is, "reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm." Where this is the case, the school staff should report their concerns to their local authority children's social care. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, schools may need to draw on a range of external services to support the student who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issues which may have contributed to a child engaging in bullying.



- The Education and Inspections Act 2006 establishes clear responsibilities for schools to respond to bullying behaviour. This includes encouraging good behaviour and the right to discipline a student for poor behaviour when they are not on school premises.
- The Equality Act 2010 replaces previous anti – discrimination laws with a single Act. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:
  - ✓ Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
  - ✓ Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
  - ✓ Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- The wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 gives teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber – bullying by providing a specific power to search for and if necessary, delete inappropriate images or files on electronic devices, including mobile phones.
- Criminal law does not specify bullying as a criminal offence in the UK, however it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications- could be a criminal offence for example under the Protection from Harassment 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003 and the Public Order Act 1986. The school may need to seek assistance from the police if an incident is considered to be a criminal offence.

## 2. Procedure for Dealing with Incidents of Bullying behaviour:

### Pastoral Team: Planning a response (as suggested by the Anti Bullying Alliance)

1. Secure the safety of the target ⇨ Take action and record
2. Focus on addressing the behaviours ⇨ Identify the bullying group, take action and monitor
3. What are the attitudes and values underpinning the behaviours? ⇨ Develop a wider resolution plan with the pupil and parents. Review.
4. What additional support or expert knowledge is needed? ⇨ What are the outcomes you want to see? Where is the data?

### **Our guiding principle is that no incident should ever be ignored.**

#### Investigate:

All incidents reported in school must be thoroughly investigated to ascertain as much of the truth as possible. All parties involved must be spoken to. Within the investigation it is important to determine whether the action was a 'repetitive, intentional hurting of one person

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or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power' or a one off relational conflict which could be more easily resolved.

### Report, Record and Check:

More serious and recurring incidents, and incidents reported by parents must be referred to the Head of Year to be dealt with. The Head of Year must keep a careful record of the report made to them, their subsequent investigations, the action they have taken and, where appropriate, details of parental involvement. If a parent has reported the incident the HOY must inform the parent of their actions. The HOY must also keep the Pastoral Assistant Head teacher informed of their concerns and actions. In those cases, where investigations of the concerns of parents or a pupil suggest that the bullying has been of a long term nature, is across many different year groups or is likely to continue the Head of Year should involve the Pastoral Assistant head teacher more directly. They will then work together, usually with the support of parents, to resolve the situation. In those incidents involving physical violence and the apparent total breakdown of relationships, the Head of Year will always seek the support of the Assistant Head teacher (Pastoral care). They will work together with the pupils and their parents to rebuild good relationships. The Head of Year will keep parents informed. Any teacher, dealing with an incident, should always check at least one month later that the situation has been resolved. Separate records must be kept of any incident of a racist nature, and the must inform the Assistant Head teacher (Pastoral care). Serious bullying incidents are reported to the Assistant Head teacher (Pastoral care) to keep a separate record.

### Reparation:

All staff dealing with incidents of bullying should attempt to rebuild good relationships. They should correct the individuals concerned, in the light of the message of the Gospel and our belief that all persons are deserving of respect. They should make it clear to the victim that revenge is not appropriate and to the bully that her behaviour is unacceptable. They should make every effort to resolve the problem through careful counselling of both parties. Where it is considered appropriate, the parties involved should be given the opportunity to talk out their differences in an attempt to resolve their problems.

### The Use of Sanctions:

To help girls recognise the importance of respect and the value of good relationships, sanctions may be used by Heads of Year, any member of the Senior Leadership Team, and the Head teacher. These sanctions vary according to the degree of seriousness of any incident regarded as bullying, from speaking quietly to all individuals concerned for minor, yet recurrent offences such as name calling, to exclusion for major incidents such as physical violence. The sanctions most commonly used are detentions and withdrawal from privileges for offences such as deliberate and hurtful gossip. In some cases, younger pupils will be referred for support from older pupils, such as Guardian Angels, who can support them in the right way.

### Parental Involvement:

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Heads of Year and any member of the Senior Leadership Team may choose to contact parents to prevent more minor incidents from escalating. In those incidents, where sanctions other than speaking quietly to individuals are used, they will always inform parents and seek their support to resolve the situation and to effect a reconciliation. Parents will always be kept informed of their actions and their views sought on whether or not a resolution has been reached. This should be done within one month of a report being made.

Parents will be signposted to external support agencies as appropriate:

[www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)

[www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk) ( 0808 800 2222)

[www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre](http://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre)

[www.internetmatters.org.uk](http://www.internetmatters.org.uk)

[www.childnet.com](http://www.childnet.com)

#### Incidents involving non-teaching staff:

Where an incident of bullying is brought to the attention of any member of the non-teaching staff, she or he should always report it to a Head of Year or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. The incident will then be investigated following the normal procedures. In the event of a very minor incident, such as a one-off name calling, the Head of Year or a Senior Leadership Team member will invite the Form Tutor to deal with it.

#### Cyberbullying

As a school we are aware of the benefits of new technologies in increasing the pace and scope of communication, but are also mindful that their popularity provides increasing opportunities for misuse through 'cyberbullying'. We have incorporated a page in the Home Learning Planner regarding the appropriate use of social networking sites. Our response to cyberbullying reflects our mission statement to educate our pupils to strive for academic excellence by accessing the wealth of information available on the internet while also striving for personal excellence in the 'right use of freedom' in a 'spirit of respect and responsible love.'

#### What is cyberbullying?

Cyber bullying is the misuse of digital technologies or communications to bully a person or a group, typically through messages or actions that are threatening and/or intended to cause offence, anxiety or humiliation.

Examples of cyber bullying:

- Abusive comments, rumours, gossip and threats made using digital communications and/or technologies - this includes internet trolling.
- Sharing pictures, videos or personal information without the consent of the owner and with the intent to cause harm or humiliation.



- Hacking into someone's email, phone or online profiles to extract and share personal information, or to send hurtful content while posing as that person.
- Creating dedicated websites that intend to harm, make fun of someone or spread malicious rumours.
- Pressurising someone to do something they do not want to such as sending a sexually explicit image.

(Kidscape website, 2016)

We will adopt our full range of anti-bullying strategies to combat this form of bullying.

- The ICT curriculum teaches pupils about the risks of new communications technologies, the consequences of their misuse, and how to use them safely. The PSHE programme incorporates time for all Formation Tutors to explain the School E-learning policy each year.
- Child Net Digital Leaders are pupils who are taking the lead on teaching other pupils about risks online, and will lead assemblies and support individuals.
- All E-communications used on the school site or as part of school activities off-site are monitored by the Network Manager and **the company Envisigo** If cyberbullying is highlighted an investigation is carried out and parents informed. One possible sanction is the withdrawal of internet access.
- Our mobile phone policy specifically states that mobile phones are not to be used during the school day and unauthorised use, including its use for texts or picture bullying, will lead to confiscation.
- Internet blocking technologies are continually updated and harmful sites are blocked by the Network Manager.
- All parents and pupils have signed an e-learning policy ensuring new communications technologies are used safely; taking account of local and national guidance and good practice. This policy is in the Home Learning Planner of each pupil.
- Year 7 Parents' Information Evening includes a workshop specifically on ICT. In this workshop all parents are informed about strategies for ensuring their daughter's safety on the internet as well as the appropriate uses and potential abuses and dangers of ICT technologies. Material is also available on the school website.
- School works closely with police on managing cyberbullying. Police talks on bullying as part of the PSHE programme, always include cyberbullying and the legal sanctions.



- As a school we will both make referrals to and advise parents to inform the Police with regards to cyberbullying
- The school participates in Anti-Bullying week which also incorporates issues relating to cyberbullying.

If parents / carers are concerned, please contact the school. We would ask all parents to:

- Be vigilant of how their child uses such technologies
- Use the relevant safety tools that are available to help monitor and manage the internet
- Keep any evidence of offending emails, text messages or online conversations
- Refer to information on our school website for support. The information on [www.childnet.com](http://www.childnet.com) is particularly helpful for advice on monitoring use of the internet.

## **Confidentiality**

All staff involved in the investigation of a bullying incident will be respectful of the confidentiality of all students involved. The safeguarding policy will be referenced if there are safeguarding concerns and information may need to be shared with other agencies to ensure the safety and well-being of the student/s.

## **Staff Training**

All staff will know of this policy at induction and through CPD meetings. Staff will receive updated information about anti-bullying and be supplied with appropriate resources. Staff have a professional responsibility to maintain their competence in responding appropriately to any bullying incidents and to seek further advice and support from a senior colleague if needed. Staff who are identified as requiring extra support will be offered support through the Senior Leadership Team and this may include shadowing, reflection, internal/external training etc.

## **Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by Anne Marie Canavan (DSL) and the Governing Body

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## **Appendix A: Advice for pupils who experience cyber bullying (Kidscape, 2016)**

Cyber bullying can seem like a never ending torment, especially when there are many people involved. But there are steps you can take, and people you can talk to in order to make it stop.

### **Recognise it**

Know what to look out for: Cyber bullying comes in many different forms; make sure you know how to recognise it when it happens.

Find the cause: Try to establish who is behind it, and why they may have targeted you. Make sure you keep the evidence, as without proof, it will be hard to make a complaint.

### **Report it**

Unless you report cyber bullying to an adult, it is very unlikely to stop. Start by talking to your parents or guardians about the types of cyber bullying you have experienced. They will be able to help you in reporting it to the following people:

The school: The school has a responsibility to protect you from bullying, even if it happens offsite, online or over the phone. Ask your parents to schedule a meeting with your teacher, and be prepared to talk to them about who has been involved.

Service providers: There are very simple steps you can take to report cyber bullies who contact you by phone, email and on social media. These are all outlined here.

The police: Forms of cyber bullying such as threatening phone calls or messages may be an illegal offence that the police can help with. Ask your parents to contact your local police station for more information.

### **Prevent it**

Don't respond: Never get involved in arguments online, as this will only escalate the situation and make it much worse.

Block the bullies: You can easily prevent cyber bullies from being able to contact you by following our cyber safe settings.

Increase your privacy: Unfortunately, some people use the internet to cause harm to others. Don't let this small group ruin your experience, but be sensible with the information you share. Follow our privacy guidelines to keep yourself protected.

Respect your online presence: It is easy to forget that the cyber world is the real world, and what you share online can have huge consequences. It is therefore so important that you always think before you post!

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## **The law is on your side**

The Protection from Harassment Act, the Malicious Communications Act 1988 and Section 43 of the Telecommunications Act may be used to combat cyberbullying. People may be fined or sent to prison for up to six months.

## **Staying safe on social media**

Most people use social media to stay connected with friends and have fun. However, there are many that don't play by the same rules, and instead merely use it as a platform to offend people or cause them harm.

Don't let these users ruin your experience, but make sure that you are sensible by keeping your profiles secure. Avoid being a target by following these simple steps.

### **Set your profiles to private**

Do you really want the whole world seeing everything that you post online? Set profiles to 'friends/followers' only.

### **But don't get complacent**

Even with strong privacy settings in place, it is important that you come to terms with the fact that what you post online is never really private. It is therefore imperative that you always think before you post.

### **Recognise the fakes**

Not everyone on social media will be who they say they are. We don't want to scare you, but there will be adults who want to cause young people harm. These people might hide behind profiles that claim to be much younger, be enrolled in school and/or have similar interests to people your age. Be very wary of anyone you don't know taking an unusual amount of interest in connecting with you. Never meet up with anybody who you haven't met in person, and make sure that you only accept friend requests from people you know

There is no positive reason why a complete stranger would need access to your personal account. If you are posting for a wider, public audience such as for a fan account or campaign, do this in a separate dedicated profile.

### **Spring clean your contacts**

Once you make a friend online, it doesn't have to be permanent. Regularly review and clean up your contacts by removing anyone you no longer engage with. Most sites also allow you to separate your contacts into lists so that that you are able to control who sees what.

### **Block anyone who bothers you**

All social media sites allow you to block people who you don't want accessing your account. It is not permanent and they won't be notified.



## **Protect your identity**

Your phone number, address, bank details and any information that may hint to your personal passwords should never be shared online. Experienced password hackers or phishing sites can piece together your information to gain access to your account, or use your identity to create a new one. Make sure passwords are strong, change them regularly and always keep them private.

## **Avoid potential disasters**

Be aware of what you send to people privately, as no matter how trustworthy they seem you can never be sure that they will not pass information on. If you would never want something to be seen in public, such as a sexual image or video, do not share it with anyone. If this ends up in the wrong hands, there can be severe consequences.

## **Inform your friends**

Other people will never respect your privacy as much as you do. Make sure your friends know your preferences about uploading pictures, tagging your location or sharing information you expect to be confidential. This works both ways, so make sure that you respect other people's privacy in the same way.

## **Be wary of suspicious messages**

Messages with a shortened URL alongside a statement such as 'OMG look at this picture of you...' or 'Have you seen what they are saying about you...' are not to be trusted. Never be fooled by the grabby statement, as it will only send you to a malicious site.

Phishing emails are also a problem. These are fake communications pretending to be a trusted organisation such as Facebook that will try and get you to log in. They can look very convincing, and even have your personal profile info, so only sign into a site through their official page or app. If something looks suspicious, check the email address and put it through a search engine. Malicious senders are usually named and shamed online!