

St Bede's School

Anti-Bullying Policy (including cyber-bullying indicators)

1 Aims

- 1.1 This policy is in accordance with the school's main aims, with its commitment to safeguarding and promoting individual and equal dignity, and fostering a growing sense of personal responsibility and responsibility for others. The policy is based on the belief that all individuals should be respected. The policy seeks to promote justice and peace within the school community so that pupils learn to manage their relationships and become good citizens. We are committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment, which is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment, so that all pupils can develop their full potential. We expect pupils to treat fellow pupils and members of staff with courtesy and co-operation, so that the school setting gives a relaxed and orderly atmosphere. All members of the school community are expected to care for and support one another and to understand the wrongfulness of bullying or in other ways harming others.
- 1.2 Respect and mutual tolerance are expected from and for all. Parents and guardians have an important role in supporting the school in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and home both have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they cooperate closely together. This policy is available to current and prospective pupils (boarding and day) and their parents, is seen as integral to the aims of St Bede's School, and made known to all staff.
- 1.3 Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination are not tolerated. We treat all pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration, and we expect them to reciprocate. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable. This policy applies to all day and boarding pupils in the school, including pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). If bullying does occur, pupils should be able to seek help whenever it is needed, whether for themselves or for others, and they are reminded that help can be sought from many different people. Pupils should know that incidents will be dealt with seriously and promptly.
- 1.4 This policy has due regard for the DfE guidance '*Preventing and Tackling Bullying 2014*'.

2 Definition of Bullying

- 2.1 In terms of this document, 'bullying' is defined as *the repeated use of aggressive behaviour with the intention of hurting another person and causing pain and distress*.
- 2.2 Bullying is the intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another person by physical means (including sexual), verbal means (including e-mail, chat-rooms and SMS messages), and emotional means (by excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity

that falls short of direct participation. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidatory. Bullying is always serious and may cause psychological damage.

- 2.3 Bullying may involve actions or comments that are racist, sexual or sexist, homophobic, or which focus on religion, cultural background, home-life, disabilities or other physical features (for example, hair colour or body shape). Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time and can involve anyone, whether pupil, other young person, member of staff or parent.
- 2.4 Cyber-Bullying involves the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to support deliberate, repeated, and/or hostile behaviour, by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others. Cyber-bullying can involve social networking sites, like Bebo, Facebook and MySpace, e-mails and mobile telephones, including when used for SMS messages and as cameras.

3 The School's Response to Bullying

- 3.1 No one deserves to be bullied, and we always treat bullying and allegations of bullying very seriously. We recognise our responsibility to respond promptly and effectively. Bullying conflicts sharply with the school's ethos on *Equal Opportunities*, as well as with its social and moral principles.
- 3.2 Bullying can cause psychological damage including eating disorders, self-harm and even suicide, and, while bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour. Any pupil and/or parents unwilling or unable to comply with the *Anti-Bullying Policy* will be asked to leave the school.

4 Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

- 4.1 Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:
- unwillingness to attend school
 - displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
 - failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others
 - books, bags and belongings suddenly going missing, or being found damaged
 - change to established habits (for example, giving up music lessons, adoption of different accent or vocabulary)
 - diminished levels of self confidence
 - frequent visits to staff with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches
 - 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
 - talking of suicide or running away
 - bullying of other children
 - fear of using the internet or mobile telephone
 - not eating

4.2 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 teachers without delay.

5 Preventative Measures

5.1 Preventative measures are put in place in order to ensure that bullying does not become a problem. These procedures are vital to combat and prevent incidents of bullying.

5.2 All new pupils (including boarders and our youngest pupils) are briefed thoroughly on the school's expected standards of behaviour. They are told what to do if they encounter bullying. It is everyone's duty to report any concern, in the knowledge that, by acting in good faith, the person raising a concern will not be penalised and will be supported.

5.3 All new members of staff are given guidance on the school's *Anti-Bullying Policy* and in how to react to allegations of bullying. They are required to read the school's policy as part of their induction. We use appropriate assemblies to explain the school's policy on bullying.

5.4 Our Citizenship programme gives pupils an awareness of social and moral responsibilities as they progress through school. It enforces the message about community involvement and taking care of one another. Other lessons, particularly Religious Education, English, History and IT highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by developing social skills and teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable. These will all include (at some level) discussion of differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice-based language.

5.5 All our pupils are encouraged to report to a member of staff at once if they know or suspect that bullying is taking place. Pupils are taught to prevent bullying of other children themselves by never becoming bystanders to the issue. Parents/carers and staff should also never be bystanders to bullying and/or cyberbullying and should report any concerns to the Headmaster or the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

5.6 All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents. Records of any incidents are kept securely by the Headmaster in order that patterns of behaviour can be identified and monitored.

5.7 We have a strong and experienced pastoral team of Form Teachers and Heads of House who support the SMT and know incidents need to be seen as an immediate priority. These members of staff are especially alert to possible signs of bullying.

5.8 The Head of Religious Studies or regular visiting priest will give support and guidance to pupils of all faiths who wish to refer themselves, perhaps at a time of family break-up, sickness or bereavement. They will provide confidential advice and seek to encourage the development of tolerance, understanding and respect for others in a multi-faith community.

5.9 Staff are on duty when pupils are not in class. They are there to support pupils, particularly at vulnerable times/areas, and are alert to inappropriate language and behaviour.

5.10 In boarding houses, pupils have the support of Boarding Staff who act in loco parentis. The informal house environment is important in reinforcing each pupil's standards and values,

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

- 5.11 We encourage close contact between the SMT and pupils' parents /carers, and we always make contact if we are worried about any pupil's wellbeing.
- 5.12 Boarders and their parents are made aware of the contents of the school's *Anti- Bullying Policy* and are aware that they can refer to certain procedures in the Parent and Pupil Handbook. Boarders know they can report anxieties to both Boarding Staff or day staff.
- 5.13 Advice on where pupils can seek help, including details of helplines and websites connecting to external specialists (for example, Childline) are displayed in the school.
- 5.14 All pupils have access to a telephone, enabling them to call for support in private.
- 5.15 Our Prefect and House system provides peer counselling, whereby older pupils are encouraged to offer advice and support to younger pupils.
- 5.16 We provide advice to the Prefects which covers the importance of offering support and assistance to younger and vulnerable pupils.
- 5.17 We have never allowed initiation ceremonies designed to cause pain, anxiety or humiliation.
- 5.18 We reserve the right to investigate incidents that take place outside school, whether on school visits and trips or in the immediate vicinity. We reserve the right also to investigate issues which arise through the use of electronic communication by or about our pupils.
- 5.19 We welcome feedback from parents/carers on the effectiveness of our preventative measures.

6 Cyber-Bullying: Preventative Measures

- 6.1 All pupils are required to adhere to our ICT User Agreement for the safe use of the internet. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and staff can monitor pupils' use.
- 6.2 Sanctions may be imposed for the misuse or attempted misuse of the internet.
- 6.3 In ICT lessons guidance is offered on the safe use of social networking sites and cyber-bullying, this guidance covering blocking, removing contacts from buddy lists and sharing personal data.
- 6.4 Guidance is offered on the safe-keeping of names, addresses, passwords, mobile telephone numbers and other personal details.
- 6.5 Mobile telephones are to be used with discretion and not in lessons unless expressly for teaching purposes, as directed by the teacher. Use of cameras on mobile telephones is not allowed in lessons (unless with express permission) and never in washing/changing areas.

7 Procedures for Dealing with Reported Bullying

- 7.1 The member of staff to whom the incident was reported, or who first discovers the situation, will take direction of the situation and reassure the pupils involved.
- 7.2 The member of staff will inform appropriate members of the SMT / Boarding Staff as soon as possible.
 - With due regard for Keeping Children Safe in Education (May/September 2016): When there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm because of a bullying incident, the issue should be treated as a child protection concern. In these cases, safeguarding protocols should be instigated. These can be found in the Safeguarding Policy under 1.7 Peer on Peer abuse.
- 7.3 The incident will be recorded centrally by the Headmaster and retained on relevant pupil files. Records should be kept to evaluate the effectiveness of our procedures and interventions, and they will also identify any emerging patterns.
- 7.4 The pupils concerned will be interviewed, those who have been hurt separately from those who have been accused, and each pupil will be asked to write an account of events.
- 7.5 Pupils should remember that, although many matters may be discussed in confidence with an appropriate member of staff, information sometimes needs to be forwarded and further help sought.
- 7.6 The staff concerned will meet with member(s) of the SMT to consider the matter and then meet with pupils, as before, to help pupils understand the situation and the way in which difficulties can be resolved. The school will support all pupils concerned, giving direction for the modification of behaviour, timescales for adjustments to be made and reminders of the sanctions for failure to correct (for example, withdrawal of privileges, suspension). Staff and pupils will need to bear in mind that any pupil unwilling or unable to comply with the *Anti-Bullying Policy* would be asked to leave the school, by either temporary or permanent exclusion.
- 7.7 The parents/carers of pupils about whom concerns have arisen will be informed and where possible invited into school to discuss matters, so that home and school work closely together to resolve any difficulties.
- 7.8 It is the policy of the school to attempt to resolve issues internally under the school's own procedures, unless a matter were of such gravity and/or regularity (after school's intervention) that the Police and/or Social Services needed to be informed, in which case a report would be made to the Police and/or Social Services.
- 7.9 Any actions taken will be recorded and parents may be informed (usually in the form of a letter to the parent(s) concerned), a copy of which will be retained and be kept in the relevant pupil file(s).
- 7.10 Throughout the process the seriousness of bullying will be stressed, and support offered to both pupils being bullied and pupils who may be bullying others, giving suitable help and guidance. The disciplinary sanctions will reflect the seriousness of a bullying incident which, in turn, will convey a deterrent effect. Pastoral care at St Bede's School embraces both the bully and the bullied – this includes:

- Disciplinary measures to pupils who bully in order to show clearly that their behaviour is wrong – these will be applied fairly, consistently, and reasonably taking account of any special educational needs or disabilities that the pupils may have and taking into account the needs of vulnerable pupils.
- Considering the motivations behind bullying behaviour and whether it reveals any concerns for the safety of the perpetrator. Where this is the case the child engaging in bullying may need support themselves.
- Involving parents to ensure that they are clear that the school does not tolerate bullying and are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being bullied. Parents can then feel confident that the school will take any complaint about bullying seriously and resolve the issue in a way that protects the child, and reinforce the value of good behaviour at home.
- Involving the pupils in understanding the school’s approach and being clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders.
- Regularly evaluating and updating our approach to take account of developments in technology, for instance updating ‘acceptable use’ policies for computers.
- Implementing disciplinary sanctions which reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see that bullying is unacceptable.
- Openly discussing differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender or sexuality. Also children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities.
- Teaching children that using any prejudice based language is unacceptable.
- Providing effective staff training where staff understand the principles and purpose of the school’s policy, its legal responsibilities regarding bullying, how to resolve problems, where to seek support, and how to report and record issues.
- Investing in specialised skills to help staff understand the needs of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGB&T) pupils.
- Working with the wider community such as the police and children’s services where bullying is particularly serious or persistent and where a criminal offence may have been committed.
- Working with other agencies and the wider community to tackle bullying that is happening outside school.
- Making it easy for pupils to report bullying so that they are assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted on - pupils should feel that they can report bullying which may have occurred outside school including cyber-bullying.
- Creating an inclusive, safe environment where pupils can openly discuss the cause of their bullying, without fear of further bullying or discrimination.
- Celebrating success - an important way of creating a positive school ethos around the issue.

8 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Pupils

- 8.1 The youngest children, as all others, are encouraged to behave towards each other with kindness and consideration. They have to learn to look after their own possessions and to respect others’ possessions. We expect pupils to be honest, helpful and polite, and to work hard and listen to others. Pupils should respect everyone and learn to value differences and diversity.

- 8.2 We explain to pupils why some forms of behaviour are unacceptable and hurtful to others. We rarely need to impose sanctions, but sometimes we may remove a treat for hurtful behaviour. Occasionally, a pupil may be sent to see the SMT who will explain the inappropriateness of a particular action, but such instances are rare.
- 8.3 Parents are always informed if a concern is raised regarding their child's behaviour. In cases of repeated instances of hurtful or inappropriate behaviour, the parents will be invited to discuss the situation with the relevant member(s) of staff in order to agree a way of handling the difficulty.

9 Complaints Procedure

- 9.1 Parents and pupils are encouraged to use our *Complaints Procedures* if they feel that their concerns about bullying (or anything else) are not being addressed properly.
- 9.2 Parents of boarders and EYFS children should be aware that they have the right also to refer a complaint directly to Ofsted, if they are unhappy with the way in which their complaint has been handled.

Headmaster
September 2016

Director of Studies
September 2016