



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Anti-bullying Policy

Mission Statement

Our Mission is to live in the way Jesus wanted. He told us to "Love One Another as I have loved you"

We aim to fulfil our Mission by:

Living as a good news community, valuing all members equally.

With Jesus as a role model, developing in everyone a sense of self respect, belonging and respect for others.

Striving to enable all children to reach their full potential through a broad, balanced and inclusive curriculum.

Working together to achieve excellence in everything we do.

Developing strong home/school and parish links.

Ensuring the success of everyone involved in the school community, nurturing their individual talents and supporting their individual needs.

Having high expectations of everyone.

Nurturing the faith journey of everyone through meaningful prayer and liturgy.

Ensuring a calm and positive atmosphere in all areas of the school.

Introduction

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School recognises there is a need to safeguard the welfare of all those within the school community and to encourage a culture of co-operation, acceptance and harmony both within and outside of school. We celebrate diversity and promote cohesion within our community.

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We have high expectations of all pupils, staff and parents and work together to prevent and reduce any instances of bullying at the school. All staff, parents and pupils strive to create a school community in which all children can fulfil their potential. There is a zero-tolerance policy for bullying at the school.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 outlines several legal obligations regarding the school's response to bullying. Under section 89, schools must have measures in place to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. These measures are part of the school's Behaviour Policy, which is communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable. If bullying does occur all incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. The school actively implements its anti-bullying policy and has clear pathways for reporting, which are known to all members of the school community. If a crime has been committed during the bullying incident, the Community Police Officer will be involved as appropriate. All reported incidents will be actioned by our Pastoral Manager, Mrs A Glossop or the Headteacher, Mrs C Williams

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010

- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- Communications Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Education Act 2011
- DfE (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2023'
- DCMS, DSIT, and UK Council for Internet Safety (2020) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Primary Relationships and Health Education Policy
- Suspension and Exclusion Policy
- Child on Child Abuse Policy
- Remote Education Policy

Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, "bullying" is defined as persistent behaviour by an individual or group with the intention of verbally, physically, or emotionally harming another person or group. Bullying is generally characterised by:

- Repetition: Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over an extended period of time
- Intent: The perpetrator means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental
- Targeting: Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group
- Power imbalance: Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations

Vulnerable pupils are more likely to be the targets of bullying due to the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves. Vulnerable pupils may include, but are not limited to:

- Pupils who are adopted
- Pupils suffering from a health problem
- Pupils with caring responsibilities
- Pupils from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds

Pupils with certain characteristics are also more likely to be targets of bullying, including, but not limited to:

- Pupils who are LGBTQ+, or perceived to be LGBTQ+
- Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) pupils
- Pupils with SEND

What is Bullying?

There is no legal definition of bullying. However, it is usually defined as behaviour that is repeated. Many kinds of behaviour can be considered bullying, and bullying can be related to almost anything. Teasing another pupil because of their appearance, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, home life, culture, or SEND are some of the types of bullying that can occur. 3

Bullying is acted out through the following mediums:

- Verbal - for example, threats, name calling, racist or homophobic remarks;
- Physical - for example, hitting, kicking, shoving, theft;

- Emotional - for example, isolating an individual from activities/games and the social acceptance of their peer group.
- Online (cyberbullying) – for example bullying via mobile phone or online (e.g. email, social networks and instant messenger)

Racist bullying: Bullying another person based on their ethnic background or skin colour. Racist bullying is a criminal offence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Public Order Act 1986.

Homophobic and biphobic bullying: Bullying another person because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation. Transphobic bullying: Bullying based on another person's gender identity or gender presentation, or for not conforming to dominant gender roles.

Sexist bullying: Bullying based on sexist attitudes expressed in a way to demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Sexist bullying may sometimes be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviours. Sexual bullying: Bullying behaviour that has a physical, psychological, verbal or non-verbal sexual dimension or dynamic that subordinates, humiliates or intimidates another person. This is commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes.

Ableist bullying: Bullying behaviour that focusses on another person's disability or support needs; this can include mocking the individual's disability or their needs, using derogatory words or slurs in relation to an individual's disability, or deliberately excluding an individual because of their disability.

Prejudicial bullying: Bullying based on prejudices directed towards specific characteristics or experiences, e.g. religion or mental health issues.

Relational bullying: Bullying that primarily constitutes of excluding, isolating and ostracising someone – usually through verbal and emotional bullying.

Socioeconomic bullying: Bullying based on prejudices against the perceived social status of the victim, including, but not limited to, their economic status, their parents' occupations, their health or nutrition level, or the perceived "quality" of their clothing or belongings.

Bullying often starts with apparently trivial events such as teasing and name calling which nevertheless rely on an abuse of power. Such abuses of power, if left unchallenged, can lead to more serious forms of abuse, such as domestic violence and abuse, racial attacks, sexual offences and self-harm or suicide.

Bullying is a type of behaviour which needs to be defined by the impact on the child being bullied rather than by the intention of the perpetrator.

Upskirting, which involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm; is a specific example of abusive behaviour which has been linked to online bullying and grooming. Upskirting is a criminal offence and should be reported to the Police.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Evaluating and reviewing this policy to ensure that it does not discriminate against any pupils on the basis of their protected characteristics or backgrounds.
- The overall implementation and monitoring of this policy.
- Ensuring that all governors are appropriately trained regarding safeguarding and child protection at induction.
- Ensuring that the school adopts a tolerant and open-minded policy towards difference.
- Ensuring the school is inclusive.
- Analysing any bullying data to establish patterns and reviewing this policy in light of these.
- Ensuring the DSL has the appropriate status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the role.

- Appointing a safeguarding link governor – Mrs Catherine Ratcliffe, who will work with the DSLs to ensure the policies and practices relating to safeguarding, including the prevention of cyberbullying, are being implemented effectively.
- Ensuring that pupils are taught how to keep themselves and others safe, including online.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Reviewing and amending this policy, accounting for new legislation and government guidance, and using staff experience of dealing with bullying incidents in previous years to improve procedures.
- Keeping a record of and monitoring instances of all reported incidents using CPOMS, including which type of bullying has occurred, to allow for proper analysis of the data collected.
- When investigating a cyberbullying incident, gathering evidence of the incident; this may involve text messages, emails, photos, etc. provided by the victim
- Analysing the data in the bullying record at termly intervals to identify trends, so that appropriate measures to tackle them can be implemented.
- Arranging appropriate training for staff members.

The Senior Leadership Team are responsible for:

- Corresponding and meeting with parents where necessary.
- Monitoring and keeping a record of instances using CPOMS
- Providing a point of contact for pupils and parents when more serious bullying incidents occur.

Teachers are responsible for:

- Being alert to social dynamics in their class.
- Logging incidents on CPOMS as soon as possible after they occur.
- Being available for pupils who wish to report bullying.
- Providing follow-up support after bullying incidents.
- Being alert to possible bullying situations, particularly exclusion from friendship groups, and informing the pupil's class teachers of such observations.
- Refraining from stereotyping when dealing with bullying.
- Understanding the composition of pupil groups, showing sensitivity to those who have been the victims of bullying.
- Reporting any instances of bullying once they have been approached by a pupil for support.

The Pastoral Manager is responsible for:

- Offering emotional support to victims of bullying.
- Alerting the relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team regarding any incidents of bullying using the CPOMS system.

Parents are responsible for:

- Informing their child's class teacher or Headteacher if they have any concerns that their child is the victim of bullying or involved in bullying in anyway.
- Being watchful of their child's behaviour, attitude and characteristics and informing the relevant staff members of any changes.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Informing a member of staff if they witness bullying or are a victim of bullying.
- Not making counter-threats if they are victims of bullying.
- Walking away from dangerous situations and avoiding involving other pupils in incidents.
- Keeping evidence of cyberbullying and informing a member of staff should they fall victim to cyberbullying.

Statutory Implications

The school understands that, under the Equality Act 2010, it has a responsibility to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, including sexual 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.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The school understands that, under the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998, it could have charges brought against it if it allows the rights of pupils to be breached by failing to take bullying seriously. The Headteacher will ensure that this policy complies with the HRA; the Headteacher understands that they cannot do this without fully involving their teaching staff.

Although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, some types of harassment, threatening behaviour and/or communications may be considered criminal offences:

- Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to electronically communicate with another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or in a way which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or contains information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by means of a public electronic communications network, a message, or other matter, that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information through any media, including internet sites.
- Other forms of bullying which are illegal and should be reported to the police include violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation, and hate crimes.

Prevention

The school will clearly communicate a whole-school commitment to addressing bullying and have a clear set of values and standards which will be regularly promoted across the whole school.

All members of the school will be made aware of this policy and their responsibilities in relation to it. All staff members will receive training on identifying and dealing with the different types of bullying.

All types of bullying will be discussed as part of the relationships and health education curriculum, in line with the Relationships and Health Education Policy.

This curriculum will explore and discuss issues at age-appropriate stages such as:

- Healthy and respectful relationships.
- Boundaries and consent.
- Stereotyping, prejudice and equality.
- Body confidence and self-esteem.
- How to recognise abusive relationships and coercive control.
- Harmful sexual behaviour, the concepts involved and why they are always unacceptable, and the laws relating to it.

Signs of bullying

Any change in behaviour which indicates fear or anxiety may be a potential indicator of bullying. Children may also choose to avoid locations and events which they had previously enjoyed - changes in attitude towards schools or organised activities are particularly significant.

Behaviour such as:

- Being frightened of walking to and from school and changing their usual route;
- Feeling ill in the mornings;
- Beginning truanting;
- Beginning to perform poorly in their school work;
- Coming home regularly with clothes or books destroyed;
- Becoming withdrawn, starting to stammer, lacking confidence, being distressed and anxious and stopping eating;

- Attempting or threatening suicide;
- Crying themselves to sleep, having nightmares;
- Having their possessions go missing;
- Asking for money or starting to steal (to pay the bully) or continually 'losing' their pocket money;
- Refusing to talk about what's wrong;
- Having unexplained bruises, cuts, scratches;
- Beginning to bully other children/siblings;
- Becoming aggressive and unreasonable. • Emotional (being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, threatening behaviour)
- Verbal (name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing)
- Physical (pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence)
- Written e.g. ridicule through drawings and writing e.g. on planners/PC's
- Incitement e.g. encouraging others to bully
- Extortion (demanding money/goods with threats)
- Racist (racial taunts, graffiti, gestures)
- Sexual (unwanted physical contact, sexually abusive comments)
- Homophobic (because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality)
- Damage to Property e.g. theft of bags, tearing clothes, ripping books • Online/Cyber e.g. inappropriate texting/emailing. (A type of bullying that happens online or through

Although the signs outlined above may not be due to bullying, they may be due to deeper social, emotional or mental health issues, so are still worth investigating. Pupils who display a significant number of these signs will be approached by a member of staff to determine the underlying issues causing this behaviour.

The following are examples of bullying behaviours:

- text messages or emails. It includes posting rumours on sites like Facebook, sharing embarrassing pictures or videos, and making fake profiles or websites.)
- Sexting (Definition: images or videos generated by children under the age of 18, or of children under the age of 18 that are of a sexual nature or are indecent.)

Incidents of bullying should be taken seriously and the behaviour discussed between parents/carers and schools. What we will do as a school;

- Ensure the whole school community has an understanding of bullying and its consequences
- Appoint a designated member of staff as anti-bullying co-ordinator
- Ensure that there are clear and consistent pathways for reporting incidents of bullying which are known to all members of the school community.
- Develop a preventative approach to bullying. Students will be encouraged to recognise that not only do they have rights; the choices they make bring responsibilities
- Implement a consistent system for recording incidents of bullying
- Be aware of factors which may cause some children to be more vulnerable than others. (See SEND principles)
- Foster a clear understanding that bullying, in any form, is not acceptable.

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This can be done by:

- Developing a policy
- Work in school which develops empathy and emotional intelligence.

- Any incidents are treated seriously and dealt with immediately. (support for both parties/sanctions where applicable)
- If a child is found to be the target of bullying outside school, then help and support will be offered and advice given on how to avoid further incidents in future. The targets and perpetrators parents will be informed.
- Work in partnership with the police should there be bullying incidents where a crime has been committed.

How we will work with targets of bullying;

- Ensure that there are clear pathways for reporting bullying
- Ensure that targets are listened to
- Ensure that strategies are put in place to support individual needs
- Ensure targets are consulted, and kept involved and informed

How we will work with those accused of bullying;

- Ensure that perpetrators are listened to
- Ensure that strategies are put in place to support individual needs
- Ensure perpetrators are consulted, and kept involved and informed
- Implement appropriate sanctions and learning programmes for example:

- counselling/instruction in alternative ways of behaving
- adult mediation between the perpetrator and the target (provided this is safe for the target)
- rewards/positive reinforcement for young people in order to promote change and bring unacceptable behaviour under control
- fixed periods of suspension
- permanent suspension (in extreme cases which may involve violence)

How we will work with bystanders/upstanders:

- Ensure that they are listened to
- Ensure that strategies are put in place to support individual needs
- Implement appropriate learning programmes and awareness raising about the impact of bystanders. Introducing the concept of being an 'upstander' rather than a bystander.

Strategies we may use for a preventative approach:

- Teaching through curriculum – Universal Prevention approach
- Assemblies
- Peer mentoring
- Anti-Bullying awareness and themed assemblies/class discussions
- Peer mediation
- Circle of Friends
- Circle Time
- Support from external agencies
- Sharing good practice with other schools
- Participation in National Anti-Bullying Week/Healthy Schools Celebration Event • Emphasise through all aspects of the whole school ethos and curriculum that bullying will not be tolerated
- Ensure that the anti-bullying co-ordinator attends appropriate training and development
- Provide training opportunities for the whole school staff
- Ensure that students learn to recognise, respect and value the differences between groups of people within the school community (Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural education via the curriculum and links to British Values)
- there are clear pathways for parents/carers to report incidents of bullying, including who to actually report the concern to
- every opportunity is given to parents/carers to share their concerns
- where a parent/carer is dissatisfied with the schools handling of a situation then the Headteacher will seek to resolve the situation informally. In the event of a formal complaint then the schools agreed complaints procedure will be invoked.
- if after following the school's formal complaints procedure the parent/carer is still dissatisfied, the Local Authority complaints procedure for handling school complaints will be followed.

- We will ensure appropriate agencies contact details who can support staff are available in the staff handbook and /or section of the school website and on notice boards in the staff rooms
- Provide training where necessary for staff
- Human Resources and Union Representatives

How we will educate the school community;

- Emphasise through all aspects of the whole school ethos and curriculum that bullying will not be tolerated
- Ensure that the anti-bullying co-ordinator attends appropriate training and development
- Provide training opportunities for the whole school staff
- Ensure that students learn to recognise, respect and value the differences between groups of people within the school community (Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural education via the curriculum and links to British Values)

How will we work with parents and carers:

By ensuring that:

How we will support staff:

Support Agencies we may consult are:

Local authority

- Educational Psychology Service

External sources of advice and support

- The Anti-Bullying Alliance
- The Anti-Bullying Company
- Think you know (Online Bullying)
- ChildLine
- Kidscape

Risks to the Child Being Bullied

The damage inflicted by bullying is often underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes anxiety, depression and self-harm.

Children are often reluctant to tell anyone about their experience either because of threats, a feeling that nothing can change their situation, that they may be partly to blame for the situation or that they should be able to deal with it themselves.

Parents, carers and agencies need to be alert to any changes in a child's behaviour such as refusing to attend school or a particular place or activity, becoming anxious in public places and crowds and becoming withdrawn and isolated. Parents should be provided with information as what they should do if they are worried that their child is being bullied - i.e. where they can obtain advice and support including keeping safe on the internet.

Any child may be bullied, but bullying often occurs if a child has been identified in some ways as vulnerable, different or inclined to spend more time on their own. Bullying may be fuelled by prejudice - racial, religious, homophobic and against children with special education needs or disabilities or who are perceived as different in some way. In cases of sexist, sexual and transphobic bullying, schools must always consider whether safeguarding processes need to be followed. This is because of the potential for this form of bullying to be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviour and the risk of serious violence (including sexual violence).

Children living away from home are particularly vulnerable to bullying and abuse by their peers.

Risks to the Child Engaging in Bullying Behaviour

Children who bully other children have often been bullied themselves and may have experienced considerable disruption in their own lives. The bullying behaviour may occur because the child is unhappy, jealous or lacking in confidence.

Work with children who bully should recognise that they are likely to have significant needs themselves.

Child on Child Abuse

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

To prevent child-on-child abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, the school will educate pupils about abuse, its forms, and the importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others through the curriculum, assemblies and PSHE/RHE lessons.

All staff will:

- Be aware that pupils of any age and gender are capable of abusing their peers.
- Be aware that abuse can occur inside and outside of school settings.
- Be aware of the scale of harassment or abuse, and that just because it is not being reported does not mean it is not happening.
- Take all instances of child-on-child abuse equally seriously regardless of the characteristics of the perpetrators or victims.
- Never tolerate abuse as “banter” or “part of growing up”, and will never justify sexual harassment, e.g. as “boys being boys”, as this can foster a culture of unacceptable behaviours and one that risks normalising abuse.
- Be aware that child-on-child abuse can be manifested in many ways, including sexting, sexual harassment and assault, and hazing or initiation-type violence.
- Always challenge any harmful physical behaviour that is sexual in nature, such as inappropriate touching. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

Sexual harassment in particular can take many forms, including but not limited to:

- Telling sexual stories, making sexual remarks, or calling someone sexualised names.
- Sexual “jokes” or taunting.
- Deliberately brushing against someone.
- Displaying images or video of a sexual nature.
- Upskirting (this is a criminal offence).
- Online sexual harassment, e.g. creating or sharing sexual imagery, sexual comments on social media, or sexual coercion or threats.

Pupils will be made aware of how to raise concerns or make a report and how any reports will be handled – this includes the process for reporting concerns about friends or peers. If a pupil has been harmed, is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral may be made to children’s social care services (CSCS), and potentially the police, where the DSL deems this appropriate in the circumstances.

All staff will be aware and sensitive towards the fact that pupils may not be ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused. Pupils being abused may feel embarrassed, humiliated, scared, or threatened.

The school’s Child-on-Child Abuse Policy outlines the school’s stance on addressing child-on-child abuse, including sexual abuse, and the procedures in place will be adhered to if any instances are uncovered or disclosed. More information on the school’s approach to preventing and managing instances of child-on-child abuse can be found within this policy and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using technology. Whether on social media sites, through a mobile phone, or gaming sites, the effects can be devastating for the young person involved.

Cyberbullying can take many forms and can go even further than face-to-face bullying by invading personal space and home life, and can target more than one person. It can also take place across age groups and target pupils, staff and others, and may take place inside school, within the wider community, at home or when travelling. It is another form of bullying which can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience. By its very nature, cyberbullying tends to involve a number of online bystanders and can quickly spiral out of control. It can sometimes draw bystanders into being accessories.

Cyberbullying can include the following:

- Threatening, intimidating or upsetting text messages
- Threatening or embarrassing pictures and video clips
- Disclosure of private sexual photographs or videos with the intent to cause distress

- Silent or abusive phone calls
- Using the victim's phone to harass others, to make them think the victim is responsible
- Threatening or bullying emails, possibly sent using a pseudonym or someone else's name
- Menacing or upsetting responses to someone in a chatroom
- Unpleasant messages sent via instant messaging
- Unpleasant or defamatory information posted to blogs, personal websites and social networking sites, e.g. Facebook

NB. The above list is not exhaustive, and cyberbullying may take other forms.

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to cyberbullying. The school views cyberbullying with the same severity as any other form of bullying and will follow the sanctions set out in this policy if they become aware of any incidents. All members of staff will receive regular training on the signs of cyberbullying, in order to identify pupils who may be experiencing issues and intervene effectively.

Many of the signs of cyberbullying will be similar to those found in this policy; however, staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a pupil is being cyberbullied:

- Avoiding use of the computer
- Being on their phone routinely
- Becoming agitated when receiving calls or text messages

Staff will also be alert to the following signs which may indicate that a pupil is cyberbullying others:

- Avoiding using the computer or turning off the screen when someone is near
- Acting in a secretive manner when using the computer or mobile phone
- Spending excessive amounts of time on the computer or mobile phone
- Becoming upset or angry when the computer or mobile phone is taken away

Parents will be sent relevant documentation in order to educate them on the signs and symptoms of cyberbullying and will be advised to report to the Headteacher if their child displays any of the signs outlined in this section.

All learning at home will follow procedures outlined in the Remote Education Policy. During times when remote education is being utilised, the school will frequently be in contact with parents to make them aware of their activities online, but also to reinforce the importance of pupils staying safe online, and explaining how filtering and monitoring procedures work.

Staff will be aware that a cyberbullying incident might include features different to other forms of bullying, prompting a particular response. Significant differences may include the following:

- Possible extensive scale and scope – pupils may be bullied on multiple platforms and using multiple different methods that are made possible by virtue of the bullying taking place online
- The anytime and anywhere nature of cyberbullying – pupils may not have an escape from the torment when they are at home due to the bullying continuing through technology at all times
- The person being bullied might not know who the perpetrator is – it is easy for individuals to remain anonymous online and on social media, and pupils may be bullied by someone who is concealing their own identity
- The perpetrator might not realise that their actions are bullying – sometimes, the culture of social media, and the inability to see the impact that words are having on someone, may lead to pupils crossing boundaries without realising
- The victim of the bullying may have evidence of what has happened – pupils may have taken screenshots of bullying, or there may be a digital footprint that can identify the perpetrator

Staff and pupils will be instructed not to respond or retaliate to cyberbullying incidents. Evidence of the incident should be recorded, e.g. taking screenshots. Staff will report incidents to their line manager or the headteacher for the incident to be investigated and support to be provided. Pupils will report incidents to a trusted member of staff.

Where offensive content is posted online targeting a staff member or pupil, the person targeted will be encouraged to use the reporting mechanism on the website or social media platform to request its removal. Where the person who has posted it is known to the school, the headteacher will request they remove it directly.

The school will support pupils who have been victims of cyberbullying by holding formal and informal discussions with the pupil about their feelings and whether the bullying has stopped.

In accordance with the Education Act 2011, the school has the right to examine and delete files from pupils' personal devices, e.g. mobiles phones, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone.

Procedures

Minor incidents will be reported to the victim's class teacher, who will investigate the incident, set appropriate sanctions for the perpetrator, and inform the Headteacher in writing, using the school's incident reporting system, of the incident and outcome.

When investigating a bullying incident, the following procedures will be adopted:

- The victim, alleged perpetrator and witnesses are all interviewed separately
- Members of staff ensure that there is no possibility of contact between the pupils being interviewed, including electronic communication
- If a pupil is injured, members of staff take the pupil immediately to a first aider for a medical opinion on the extent of their injuries
- A room is used that allows for privacy during interviews
- A witness is used for serious incidents
- If appropriate, the alleged perpetrator, the victim and witnesses are asked to write down details of the incident; this may need prompting with questions from the member of staff to obtain the full picture
- The Headteacher will gather evidence of a cyberbullying incident; this may involve text messages, emails, photos, etc. provided by the victim
- Premature assumptions are not made, as it is important not to be judgemental at this stage
- Members of staff listen carefully to all accounts, being non-confrontational and not assigning blame until the investigation is complete
- All pupils involved are informed that they must not discuss the interview with other pupils

Due to the potential for some specific forms of bullying to be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviour, staff members involved in dealing with the incident are required to consider whether there is a need for safeguarding processes to be implemented.

Sanctions

If the headteacher is satisfied that bullying did take place, the perpetrator will be helped to understand the consequences of their actions and warned that there must be no further incidents. The headteacher will inform the perpetrator of the type of sanction to be used in this instance, e.g. suspension or in school consequence, and future sanctions if the bullying continues.

If possible, the headteacher will attempt reconciliation and will obtain an apology from the perpetrator. This will either be in writing to the victim, and/or witnesses if appropriate, or face-to-face, but only with the victim's full consent.

Parents are informed of bullying incidents and what action is being taken.

All staff involved in managing instances of bullying will be aware that taking disciplinary action and providing support are not mutually exclusive actions, and should be conducted simultaneously to encourage more positive behaviour in future.

The school will avoid unnecessarily criminalising pupils for bullying or abusive behaviour where possible, as young people with criminal records face stigma and discrimination in future aspects of their lives. The school's focus when handling perpetrators will be supporting them to develop more positive behaviours and to refrain from abusive and bullying behaviours in the future.

The Headteacher and class teacher informally monitors the pupils involved over the next half term.

The school will remain cognisant of the fact that continued access to school can be important for rehabilitation of harmful behaviour, and will not exclude pupils unless as a last resort – where there have been serious or consistent incidents of bullying, the school will act in line with the Suspension Policy.

Support

In the event of bullying, victims will be offered the following support:

- Emotional support and reassurance from the Pastoral Manager
- Reassurance that it was right to report the incident and that appropriate action will be taken
- Liaison with their parents to ensure a continuous dialogue of support
- Advice not to retaliate or reply, but to keep the evidence and show or give it to their parent or a member of staff
- Advice on aspects of online safety, in the event of cyberbullying, to prevent re-occurrence, including, where appropriate, discussion with their parents to evaluate their online habits and age-appropriate advice on how the perpetrator might be blocked online
- Discussion with their parent on whether police action is required (except in serious cases of child exploitation or abuse where the police may be contacted without discussion with parents)

The Headteacher will carefully consider in each instance of bullying that is handled whether it is appropriate to split up the victim(s) and perpetrator(s). Victims will be encouraged to broaden their friendship groups.

Staff, particularly the DSL's and Pastoral Manager, will work with the victim to build resilience, e.g. by offering emotional support.

The school will acknowledge that bullying may be an indication of underlying mental health issues. The school will work with the perpetrator regarding any underlying mental health or emotional wellbeing problems.

Bullying outside of school

Staff will remain aware that bullying can happen both in and outside of school, and will ensure that they understand how to respond to reports of bullying that occurred outside school in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and the Child-on-Child Abuse Policy.

The headteacher has a specific statutory power to discipline pupils for poor behaviour outside of the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives the Headteacher the power to regulate pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises, and therefore, not under the lawful charge of a school staff member.

Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops or in a town or village centre.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and acted upon. In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying, members of staff can only discipline the pupil on school premises, or elsewhere when the pupil is under the lawful control of the member of staff, e.g. on a school trip.

The Headteacher is responsible for determining whether it is appropriate to notify the police of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police will be informed.

Although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, some types of harassment, threatening behaviour and/or communications may be considered criminal offences:

- Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to electronically communicate with another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or in a way which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or contains information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by means of a public electronic communications network, a message, or other matter, that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information through any media, including internet sites.

Other forms of bullying which are illegal and should be reported to the police include violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation, and hate crimes.

Record Keeping

The DSL will ensure that robust records are kept, using the online system CPOMS, with regard to all reported or otherwise uncovered incidents of bullying – this includes recording where decisions have been made, e.g. sanctions, support, escalation of a situation and resolutions.

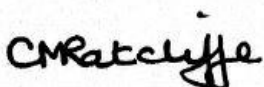
The headteacher and DSL will ensure that all decisions and actions recorded are reviewed on a regular basis for the purposes of:

- Identifying patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour on the part of certain pupils that may need to be handled, e.g. with pastoral support.
- Reflecting on whether cases could have been handled better and using these reflections to inform future practice.
- Considering whether there are wider cultural issues at play within the school, e.g. whether school culture facilitates discriminatory bullying by not adequately addressing instances, and planning to mitigate this.
- Considering whether prevention strategies could be strengthened based on any patterns in the cases that arise.
- Responding to any complaints about how cases have been handled.

Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed every two years by the Headteacher and the DSL's. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Signed:



Chair of Governors

Signed:



Acting Head of School

Approved date: December 2024

Review date: December 2025