



ST PHILIP'S SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Author/reviewer responsible:	AWT	Last amended:	Sept 2023
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Authorisation by resolution of:	Governors	Date of next review:	Sep 2024

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

This anti-bullying policy forms an integral part of the School Pupil Behaviour Policy and should be read in conjunction with it.

Requirements of this policy

This policy is compliant with paragraph 10 of Part 3 (welfare, health and safety of pupils) of the [Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#). It has regard to the DfE guidance [Preventing and tackling bullying](#) (July 2017). It follows advice provided by the children's charity Kidscape.¹ The School has a legal obligation to prevent and tackle bullying, under the Education Act 2002, the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the Equalities Act 2010.

Aims of this policy

- To establish a comprehensive and effective anti-bullying policy that applies to all boys, parents and staff and which supports a culture where bullying is unlikely to occur (prevention) and enables swift action to be taken if and when bullying does occur (intervention).
- To define the nature of bullying, including cyber-bullying, so that it can be recognised.
- To define the roles and responsibilities of staff, parents and boys in preventing and tackling bullying.
- To link the School's Anti-bullying Policy to its other policies on behaviour (sanctions) and safeguarding.

Availability of this policy

This policy is available to all staff and parents via the School website in the policies section: www.stpschool.co.uk.

Management of bullying

Day to day responsibility for preventing and tackling bullying lies with the Deputy Head.

¹ Kidscape: preventing bullying, protecting children, [Anti-bullying school policy and procedures checklist](#).

Deputy Head (Pastoral)

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In the absence of the Deputy Head, day to day responsibility for preventing and tackling bullying lies with the Head Master.

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The Deputy Head (Pastoral) ensures that Form Teachers, academic staff and other staff have the training appropriate to their role and awareness to deal with bullying and that actual cases are handled according to the School's policy and procedures. This is provided through INSET, staff meetings and, in some cases, courses. Weekly SMT meetings monitor pastoral issues and the Governors monitor issues through the termly pastoral reports. One Governor in particular is named for safeguarding.

The School also employs a counsellor/listener who can be consulted on anti-bullying.

Responsibility of parents

Support for the School's Anti-bullying Policy is a condition of joining the School and parents have a responsibility to support the School in imposing sanctions if, in the professional opinion of the School, their son is responsible for bullying.

Complaints procedure

Parents are encouraged to contact the School if they have a concern about bullying. If they consider that it is necessary to make a formal complaint about the School's anti-bullying policy, procedures or sanctions they may use the complaints procedure (see the Parents' Area of the school website (www.stpschool.co.uk)).

PART 2: WHAT IS BULLYING?

What is bullying?

The DfE defines bullying and cyber-bullying as follows:²

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; teachers and schools have to make their own judgements about each specific case.

What is cyber-bullying?

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

Cyberbullying can involve social networking sites, like Facebook, WhatsApp, Snapchat and Instagram, emails and mobile phones (texts/photos/videos).

Who might bully or be bullied?

The DfE guidance explains the dynamics that often underpin bullying:

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Although bullying can happen to all children, some pupils may be particularly vulnerable to bullying:³

- those with SEN or disabilities;
- those going through a personal or family crisis;
- those suffering from a health problem;
- children in care, especially when a newcomer in a school;

²[Prevention and tackling bullying](#), p 6.

³ The following list is taken from the DfE document [School support for children and young people who are bullied](#).

- those with caring responsibilities, who may become socially isolated (and may, therefore, turn to social media for friendship, or to 'get their own back').

What is not bullying?

The School distinguishes between bullying and teasing. If boys engage in light-hearted teasing and one party gets upset, that is not bullying. However, it could become bullying if it was sustained or malicious. It is important to consider the context before labelling behaviour as bullying.

Policy of the School on bullying

Bullying of any sort is not tolerated at the School. Bullying can be peer to peer, teacher to pupil or student to teacher. Bullying can happen on the School premises or away from the School (including, for example, on the journey to and from School, at clubs or online).⁴ Wherever the School receives a complaint about bullying it has a duty to act. Where the bullying that has occurred is so serious that it may constitute a criminal offence, the School will report the incident to the police.

The consequences of bullying

While many cases of bullying will be straightforward to rectify, the School reminds its staff, parents and boys of the serious effects that bullying can have. Consequences include psychological damage, eating disorders and self-harm.

Recognising the signs of bullying

Staff and parents should be alert to the signs of bullying, which may include any of the following:

- reluctance to attend School;
- excessive anxiety, low self-confidence, withdrawn or unusually quiet behaviour;
- preferring the company of adults to peers;
- not doing School work, or doing so poorly; submitting copied, interfered with or spoiled work;
- frequent absence, erratic attendance, lateness;
- books, bags and other belongings suddenly going missing, or being damaged;
- change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary);
- frequent complaints of stomach pains, headaches, etc.;
- unexplained cuts and bruises;
- displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact;
- difficulty in sleeping; nightmares;
- talking of suicide or running away.

⁴ See 'Bullying outside school premises' in [Prevention and tackling bullying](#), p 6-7.

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.

PART 3: PREVENTION

Preventing bullying at the School

The School's aim is to 'create an environment that prevents bullying from being a serious problem in the first place.'⁵ The School promotes an environment such as this in three main ways: the ethos of the School; a culture of high expectations and personal achievement; and clear understanding of the School's policies among both boys and parents.

i) Ethos

The School's Catholic ethos places the values of the Gospel – love of God and neighbour – in the heart school life. Prayers, Mass, Religious Studies and the example of teachers all reinforce the imperative to 'love thy neighbour as thyself'. The School is a centre of human formation where academic potential, extra-curricular talents and moral formation come together to form fully integrated young people.⁶

St Philip's is a small Catholic school. It is well-known for creating an atmosphere that is warm, welcoming and supportive, and we aim for every pupil to feel a valued member of the school community and to have a sense of being personally cared for by our teaching staff. Having experienced this, we hope that he is inspired to respond to others in a similar fashion.

The moral values of the School are also conveyed on a rational basis in PSHCE, which is a natural-law-based programme that teaches how the human virtues – prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude – lead to flourishing and happiness. Boys learn that unkind behaviour harms the victim (who suffers) and also the perpetrator (whose character does not flourish and therefore distances himself from happiness).

Where boys are dealing with sensitive issues – for example, bereavement or the sickness of a relative – they are given people who they can turn to, including teachers, the School counsellor, and the School Chaplain.

ii) Expectations

The School believes that if its pupils sense that they are flourishing in the academic and extra-curricular life then they are less likely to bully others or be subjected to bullying. The School therefore puts the needs of the boy at the centre of its planning. From the

⁵[Preventing and tackling bullying](#), p 8.

⁶ See [The Catholic School](#), paragraphs 28-30.

academic curriculum and the range of extra-curricular (music and sports) activities and clubs – and their associated rewards systems – boys have many opportunities to feel that they are being stretched and achieving things at School.

iii) Communication

It is vital that the School's policies on behaviour and bullying are understood and supported by staff, parents and boys. Therefore, staff are trained in the School's anti-bullying policy and procedures and know that supervision is a vital part of prevention (e.g. in the garden); parents are told about the School's policy in orientation meetings and via the School website; boys are taught about anti-bullying in assemblies, PSHE and workshops; and boys are encouraged to be 'whistle-blowers' as opposed to silent bystanders. Older boys, especially prefects, know they have a particular responsibility. Parents are invited to anti-bullying workshops.

Preventing cyberbullying

The School recognises that boys are just as likely to experience bullying through online games and social media as in a face-to-face situation. The School therefore makes the following provision to prevent cyberbullying:

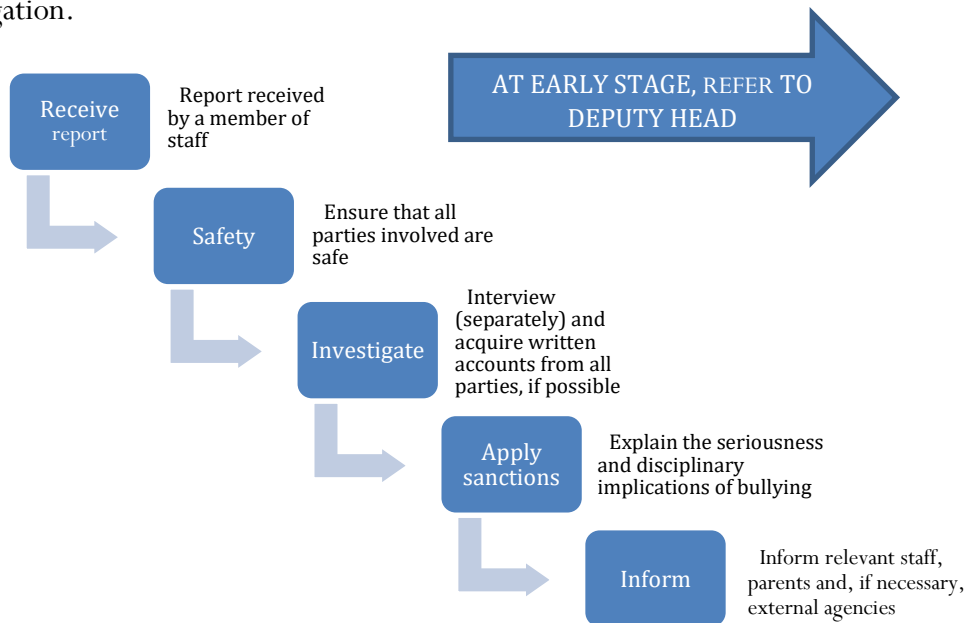
- all parents and boys sign an ICT code of conduct;
- the School has a filtering system to prevent access to unsuitable web pages;
- the School will treat misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet, as a serious disciplinary offence;
- all boys are issued with a School email address which they must use at School;
- the School holds assemblies and runs workshops on the safe use of mobile phones, the internet and social networking sites (for boys, parents and staff); these cover blocking, removing contacts, and sharing personal data as well as keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe;
- mobile phones and other electronic devices are not permitted in School. Boys who travel unaccompanied may – with prior written parental permission given to the School – drop their phone at the School door upon arriving at School and collect it from the same location upon leaving School;
- the use of cameras on mobile phones is not allowed at any time.

PART 4: INTERVENTION

The School has a clear anti-bullying policy and procedures which are communicated to staff, parents and boys on a regular basis, and whenever there is an apparent incident of bullying the School will act quickly, fairly and consistently.

The reporting procedure

Any member of staff may receive a complaint of bullying. If the matter is particularly serious, staff are recommended to refer it to the Deputy Head Pastoral. In more routine cases, staff can also refer the matter to the Deputy Head Pastoral, but this procedure shows what a member of staff should do if they are required to carry out an investigation.



Contacting parents

In any cases where a boy has either been bullied or has been accused of bullying someone else, the parents will be informed as soon as possible and a meeting arranged. However, it may not be possible to contact parents immediately as at least a preliminary investigation will be necessary. The School should do whatever it can to resolve the issue within the School day so that parents can be informed before collection/departure. The School will remind parents that they should not seek to reprimand another boy for bullying.

In cases of serious misconduct

Where serious misconduct has occurred – such as where serious bodily harm has occurred – the School will be obliged to inform the police. Similarly, where the School is concerned for the wellbeing of a boy – whether the victim or perpetrator of bullying,

it may be necessary to contact outside agencies⁷ where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. Where the School feels that significant emotional or psychological harm has been suffered as a result of bullying it will endeavour to provide the pastoral support needed to overcome it.

Sanctions and exclusion

The sanctions for bullying depend on the nature and context of the incident. The School's range of sanctions are outlined in the behaviour policy. The School may exclude a boy, either temporarily or permanently, in cases of severe and persistent bullying and in the event that the support put in place for the bully does not result in the modification of behaviour to an acceptable level.

Recording, monitoring and responding to incidents of bullying

The member of staff who has received the concern/complaint should make an accurate record of all the information gathered (e.g. written accounts of the parties and any witnesses). They should email the Deputy Head Pastoral. The Deputy Head Pastoral is responsible for making or ensuring timely, full and accurate records of cases of bullying or suspected bullying, and will store any such records securely in school.

Monitoring long-term impact and behaviour

Where a boy has been bullied or has bullied another boy, the Deputy Head and other staff, as appropriate, will carefully monitor the long-term impact and behaviour of the incident. The perpetrator will be informed of the consequences of a recurrence and offered coping strategies to avoid any such behaviour. The victim will also be informed about what to do in such an event and discouraged from seeking revenge. As a Catholic School we promote the belief that when we make mistakes we should seek forgiveness, and that when forgiveness is sincerely sought it should be given: 'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.' In some circumstances, it may be desirable to bring both parties together to enable reconciliation.

⁷ For contact details, see the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.