



ANTI-HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY

STUDENTS

ST JOHN'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL & SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

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Statement of intent

Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust believes that all students are entitled to learn in a safe and supportive environment; this means being free from all forms of bullying behaviour. This policy outlines how instances of bullying are dealt with, including the procedures to prevent occurrences of bullying.

These strategies, such as learning about tolerance and difference as part of the school's curriculum, aim to promote an inclusive, tolerant and supportive ethos at the school.

All staff, parents and students work together to prevent and reduce any instances of bullying at the school. There is a zero-tolerance policy for bullying at the school.

Legal framework

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

- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying'
- DfE (September 2021) 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges'
- DfE (2018) 'Promoting and Supporting Mental health and Wellbeing in Schools and Colleges'
- DfE (2021) 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2021)'
- DfE (2020) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'

The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 provide that the proprietor of an Academy or other independent school ensures that bullying at the school is prevented in so far as reasonably practicable, by the drawing up and implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy.

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Children / Child Protection Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Relationships and Health Education Policy

Definitions

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, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

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 a period of time.
- **Intent:** The perpetrator(s) 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 students 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 students may include, but are not limited to:

- Students with SEND.
- Students who are adopted.
- Students suffering from a health problem.
- Students with caring responsibilities.

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

- Students who are LGBTQ+, or perceived to be LGBTQ+.
- Students from BAME backgrounds.
- Students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Acts of bullying can include:

- name-calling;
- taunting;
- mocking;
- making offensive comments;
- kicking;
- hitting;
- pushing;
- taking belongings;
- inappropriate text messaging and emailing;
- sending offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet e.g. via social networking sites;
- producing graffiti;
- gossiping;
- excluding people from groups;
- spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.

Cyberbullying can be defined as the use of information and communications technology particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else. Cyberbullying can include the following:

- Threatening, intimidating or upsetting text messages
- Threatening or embarrassing pictures and video clips sent via mobile phone cameras
- Silent or abusive phone calls or 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

There is evidence to suggest that students who are bullied in school are more likely to be bullied out of school, for instance either on their way to or from school or through cyberbullying.

Types of bullying

Many kinds of behaviour can be considered bullying, and bullying can be related to almost anything.

Teasing another student because of their appearance, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, home life, culture, disability, or SEND are some of the types of bullying that can occur.

Bullying is acted out through the following mediums:

- Verbally
- Physically
- Emotionally
- Online (cyberbullying)

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

Homophobic/bi-phobic 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.

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

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

Socio-economic 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.

Roles and responsibilities

The Board of Directors and Local Governing Committees are responsible for:

- Evaluating and reviewing this policy.
- Analysing any bullying data to establish patterns and reviewing this policy in light of these.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Analysing the data in the bullying record at termly intervals to identify trends, to ensure appropriate measures to prevent re-occurrence can be implemented
- Reporting incidents of bullying to governors through the headteacher report and annual report on bullying and racist incidents
- Arranging appropriate training for staff members.

Staff with pastoral responsibilities are responsible for:

- Corresponding and meeting with parents where necessary.
- Providing a point of contact for students and parents when more serious bullying incidents occur.
- Keeping a Bullying Report Form (**Annex A**) of all reported incidents, including which type of bullying has occurred, to allow for proper analysis of the data collected.
- Offering emotional support to victims of bullying

Teachers are responsible for:

- Being alert to social dynamics in their class.
- Being available for students who wish to report bullying.
- Providing follow-up support after bullying incidents.
- Being alert to possible bullying situations, particularly exclusion from friendship groups, and monitoring and reporting such observations.
- Reporting any instances of bullying once they have been approached by a student for support.

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Informing the school 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 school of any changes.

Students 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 students in incidents.
- Keeping evidence of cyberbullying and informing a member of staff should they become a victim to cyberbullying.

Signs of bullying

Staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a student is a victim of bullying:

- Being frightened to travel to or from school
- Unwillingness to attend school
- Repeated or persistent absence from school
- Becoming anxious or lacking confidence
- Saying that they feel ill repeatedly
- Decreased involvement in school work
- Leaving school with torn clothes or damaged possessions
- Missing possessions
- Missing dinner money
- Asking for extra money or stealing
- Cuts or bruises
- Lack of appetite
- Unwillingness to use the internet or mobile devices
- Becoming agitated when receiving calls or text messages
- Lack of eye contact
- Becoming short tempered
- Change in behaviour and attitude at home

Although the signs outlined above may not be due to bullying, they may be due to deeper social, emotional or mental health issues and should be followed-up and investigated. Students who display a significant number of these signs will be approached by a member of staff to determine the underlying issues causing this behaviour and offer support.

Staff will be aware of the potential factors that may indicate a student is likely to exhibit bullying behaviours, including, but not limited to, the following:

- They have experienced mental health problems, which have led to them becoming more easily aggravated
- They have been the victim of abuse
- Their academic performance has started to fall and they are showing signs of stress

Prevention

The school will proactively gather intelligence about issues between students which might provoke conflict and develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place. This might involve talking to students about issues of difference, in lessons, through dedicated events or projects, or through assemblies. Staff will determine what will work best for their students, depending on the particular issues they need to address.

The school will create and maintain an ethos of positive behaviour where students treat one another and staff with respect. This culture extends beyond the classroom to the corridors, the dining hall, the playground, and beyond the school gates including travel to and from school. Values of respect for staff and other students, an understanding of the value of education, and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others permeates the whole school environment and is reinforced by staff.

The school will pursue a number of inter-related strategies to successfully prevent and tackle bullying. These include the following:

- 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.
- Involving students so they understand the school's approach and are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders.
- regularly evaluating and updating their approach to take account of developments in technology.
- implementing appropriate disciplinary sanctions in line with the Pupil/Student Behaviour Policy so that the consequences of bullying reflect their seriousness and to act as a deterrent to others.
- openly discussing differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related differences. All types of bullying will be discussed as part of the RSE and health education curriculum, in line with the Relationships and Health Education Policy.

- using specific organisations or resources for help with particular problems anti-bullying organisations with a proven track record and/or specialised expertise in dealing with certain forms of bullying.
- providing effective staff training and CPD so staff understand this policy, our legal responsibilities regarding bullying, how to resolve problems, and where to seek support.
- work with the wider community such as the Police and Children's Services to agree a clearly understood approach to cases where bullying is particularly serious or persistent and where a criminal offence may have been committed.
- make it easy for students to report bullying so that they are assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted on. Students should feel that they can report bullying which may have occurred outside school including cyber-bullying. All reported incidents will be investigated instances of bullying will be investigated by a member of staff.
- encouraging pupil co-operation and the development of interpersonal skills and diversity. Difference and respect for others will be promoted and celebrated through various lessons.
- organising and altering seating plans where necessary and possible in a way that prevents instances of bullying.
- providing opportunities to extend friendship groups and interactive skills through participation in different pupil work groups and through special events e.g. drama productions, sporting activities and cultural activities.
- providing a safe place and trusted member of staff for students to go particularly for vulnerable students and those who have previously experienced bullying.
- being alert to, and addressing, any mental health and wellbeing issues amongst students.
- ensuring potential perpetrators are given support as required, so their educational, emotional and social development is not negatively influenced by outside factors, e.g. mental health issues.

All staff will treat reports of bullying seriously and will not ignore signs of suspected bullying. Staff will act immediately when they become aware of a bullying incident. Unpleasantness from one pupil towards another will always be challenged and will never be ignored.

Staff will always respect students' privacy, and information about specific instances of bullying and will not be discussed with others without consent unless there is a safeguarding concern where the matter will be immediately referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Follow-up support will be given to both the victim and perpetrator in the months following an incident to ensure no further incidents have occurred.

Preventing peer-on-peer abuse

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as peer on peer abuse) and that it can happen both inside and outside of school and online. It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of peer on peer abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports.

All staff should understand, that even if there are no reports in their schools it does not mean it is not happening. As such it is important if staff have any concerns regarding peer on peer abuse they should speak to their Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy).

It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers and do not downplay certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as “just banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys”. This can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse resulting in students not coming forward to report it.

Instances of peer on peer abuse will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

To prevent peer-on-peer abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, the school will educate students about abuse, its forms, and the importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others through the curriculum, assemblies and PSHE lessons. The school will also ensure that students are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum, in PSHE lessons, relationships education and group sessions.

Where a student is found to have been involved in harmful sexual behaviour, the school will help the pupil to move forward from the incident by supporting them in adopting more positive behaviour patterns and attitudes.

All staff will be made aware of the heightened vulnerability of students with SEND, who are more likely to be abused than their peers. Staff will not assume that possible indicators of abuse relate to the pupil's SEND and will always explore indicators further.

The school's response to sexual violence and sexual harassment between students of the same sex will be equally as robust as it is for incidents between students of the opposite sex.

Students 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.

Procedures

If bullying is detected/reported, the following steps may be taken:

- If bullying of any sort is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached.
- The victim, alleged perpetrator and witnesses will be interviewed separately
- Members of staff ensure that there is no possibility of contact between the students being interviewed, including electronic communication
- A clear account of the incident will be recorded and given to the Assistant Head of Year/Head of Year/Leadership Link
- If appropriate, in the case of a serious incident, the alleged perpetrator, the victim together with any witnesses are asked to write down details of the incident in line with Appendix 3 of the Student Behaviour Policy
- The Assistant Head of Year/Head of Year/Leadership Link will interview all concerned and will record the incident - **See Annex A**
- Pastoral Tutors will be kept informed and if it persists the Form Tutor will advise the appropriate subject teachers.
- Parents will be kept informed.
- When a suspected incident is reported or observed, the victim must be listened to and the facts established. An outline of the facts must be recorded carefully by the member of staff who observed the incident, or to whom the incident was reported – this must be done on an official referral Form.
- The victim must be reassured and told that action is going to be taken and the timescale pointed out.
- The member of staff must forward the recorded incident to the appropriate Assistant Head of Year/Head of Year/Leadership Link as soon as possible and no later than the end of the day. Delay will allow essential information to be diluted or blocked by the alleged perpetrator.
- The Assistant Head of Year/Head of Year/Leadership Link with the aid of the victim's Pastoral Tutor and the alleged bully's Pastoral Tutor, must interview both individuals and allow them to provide a written account (independently of each other) of the incident.
- If the facts show that bullying has occurred, then the parents of the bully must be informed of the serious nature of the offence and asked for their comments.
- Punitive measures will be used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties. Repeated instances of bullying will be referred to the year group's Leadership Link and/or the Deputy Headteachers/Headteacher as appropriate.
- In serious, extreme cases, exclusion maybe the required solution. However, this course of action will only take place when all the facts have been established and a discussion has ensued between the year group Leadership link and Deputy Headteachers/Headteacher. If a serious physical assault takes place, parents must be informed immediately. In such an event, the Headteacher/Deputy Headteachers/Assistant Headteacher DSL may inform the Police and Children's Services as "child to child" violence is construed as child abuse.
- At all stages events must be documented - facts/actions/closure on CPOMS

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 (or designated staff member) is satisfied that bullying did take place, the pupil will be helped to understand the consequences of their actions and warned that there must be no further incidents. The headteacher will inform the student of the type of sanction to be used in accordance with the Behaviour Policy and any possible future sanctions if the bullying continues.

If possible, the headteacher will attempt reconciliation and will obtain an apology from the perpetrator. Discretion will be used here; victims will never feel pressured into a face-to-face meeting with the perpetrator.

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

Where there have been serious or consistent incidents of bullying, the school will consider permanent exclusion as a possible sanction.

Support

Students who have been bullied will be supported in the following ways:

- Being listened to
- Having an immediate opportunity to meet with their lead for pastoral support or member of staff of their choice
- Being reassured
- Being offered continued support
- Referral to another internal or externally provided service / programme where necessary including counselling and emotional therapy to help build resilience.

Perpetrators of bullying will be supported in the following ways:

- Receiving a consequence for their actions
- Being able to discuss what happened
- Being helped to reflect on why they became involved
- Being helped to understand what they did wrong and why they need to change their behaviour
- Appropriate assistance from parents
- Understanding if there are any underlying emotional or mental health reasons for their behaviour

Bullying outside of school

The headteacher has a specific statutory power to discipline students 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 students' 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 students for misbehaving outside of 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 student on school premises, or elsewhere when the student 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 student. If the misbehaviour could be of a criminal nature, or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police will be informed.

Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed every 3 years by the headteacher and the DSL.

Bullying Report Form

Personal details	
Name of person reporting incident:	
Name of student being bullied:	
Year group:	
Class teacher / Pastoral group:	
Incident details	
What happened?	
What form of bullying did the incident relate to? Tick all applicable.	
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation - homophobic / bi-phobic bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transphobic bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion or culture	<input type="checkbox"/>
SEN / Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prejudicial bullying based on specific characteristics e.g. appearance health condition, disability	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexist / Sexual bullying e.g. based on gender / sexist attitudes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relational bullying e.g. excluding, isolating or ostracising someone	<input type="checkbox"/>

Socio-economic based on social and economic status	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Where did the incident take place?	
Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corridors	<input type="checkbox"/>
Playground	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilets	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dining Room	<input type="checkbox"/>
Changing room	<input type="checkbox"/>
School transport	<input type="checkbox"/>
To and from school and home	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
What did the incident involve? Tick all applicable.	
Physical abuse - kicking, hitting, pushing etc	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Verbal abuse - name calling, mocking, teasing etc	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Emotional abuse - taking belongings, damaging property, spreading rumours, isolation / ostracization etc	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Cyberbullying e.g. inappropriate texting, e-mail, mobile phone, social media, including offensive / degrading images	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
When did the incident occur?	

Who has been suspected of bullying?
Did anyone else see the incident?
According to the victim, how often does the bullying take place?
According to the victim, how long has the bullying been going on?

Name:

Designation:

Date: