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## **Counter-bullying Policy**

### **(Extracted from Good Behaviour Policy and updated 3.23)**

#### **Introduction**

We are committed to creating a caring, friendly environment where every member of the school can thrive. Students should be safe and able to learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school and will not be tolerated. If bullying does occur, in or out of school, all students should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a *telling* school. This means anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a member of staff and never to be a bystander. The student's voice is important within the School.

This policy has been drawn up taking into account the DfE's guidance Preventing and tackling bullying (July 2017) Keeping Children safe in Education 2022 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and will be reviewed against any new government guidance issued from time to time.

#### **What is bullying?**

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

Bullying behaviour can occur in a variety of ways; these may be classified as:

- Emotional: excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Relating to gender: issues of sexuality, LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Asexual, Intersex, Ally, 2 spirit, Pansexual, Agender, Gender Queer, Bigender, Gender Variant, Pangender)
- Physical: punching, kicking, hitting, or any use of violence
- Racial: racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Relating to religion/belief: disrespecting faith / spiritual beliefs and traditions
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments (see

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures)
- Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyberbullying: inappropriate use of the internet, mobile electronic devices, social networking sites etc (see also the School's E-Safety Policy (internet safety) and Acceptable Use Policy)
- SEND: because of any Special Educational Need and/or Disability
- Related to family issues or about being adopted or being a carer.

The School has due regard to the Equality Act (2010).

A person who makes a physical or sexual assault on another, or who steals or causes damage to the property of another, commits a criminal offence. Bullying behaviour may also be regarded as threatening behaviour or harassment which can be either a criminal offence or a civil wrong. Misuse of electronic communications could also be a criminal offence, for example it is an offence to send an electronic communication (such as a text message, image or email or any form of social media) to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety.

Whilst bullying usually refers to student(s) behaviour it is recognised that adults can be bullies too. If a student feels that they are being bullied by an adult, in any of the ways listed above, it is important to talk to someone about these issues so that the bullying can be stopped. Adults must not bully students.

A bullying incident will be treated as a safeguarding concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.

### Signs and symptoms

A student who is being bullied may:

- change their usual routine
- be unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- become anxious and withdrawn
- attempt or threaten suicide
- cry themselves to sleep at night or have nightmares
- feel ill in the mornings
- truant
- begin to do poorly at school
- come home with clothes/books torn
- have possessions 'go missing'
- ask to borrow money or steal money
- continually 'lose' pocket money
- have unexplained cuts/bruises
- become withdrawn, lack confidence
- become aggressive and unreasonable
- bully other children or siblings
- make frequent visits to the Medical Centre with no defined illness
- give improbable excuses to any of the above

## Why is it important to respond to bullying?

Bullying hurts. No-one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Students who bully need to learn different ways of behaving. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Victims and bullies will be helped in order to develop their self-confidence, which in turn, will promote sound citizenship.

The school has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying. If cyber-bullying takes place, a prompt report can limit the damaging circulation of messages/images, e.g. sexting, 'frape', etc.

The context of the bullying and its nature will be considered, and we recognise that it can happen anywhere. For example, all students are vulnerable to on-line bullying, wherever they are. However, if there were a case of physical bullying at school this might disproportionately affect boarders who, unlike Day students, are unable to leave school behind at the end of the day. By comparison, Day students might suffer bullying at home or on the way to and from school from people outside of School. Students with SEND may also be more vulnerable but may be less able to respond or report bullying. Thus staff will be trained to look out for references to bullying in a variety of contexts and to treat each case individually, sensitively and seriously.

## Objectives

- All members of the Governing Body, teaching and non-teaching staff, students and parents should understand what bullying is.
- All members of the Governing Body and teaching and non-teaching staff, students and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.
- As a school we take bullying seriously. Students and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- As a school we wish to be inclusive and avoid any forms of discrimination.
- We value and promote positive behaviour by celebrating success and expecting staff and students to act as positive role models.
- In January 2021 Chetham's joined the Anti Bullying Alliance

## Procedures

Students should report bullying incidents to any member of staff e.g. **Head of House, Head of School, Joint Principal** (Ms Nicola Smith), **Nurse, Tutor** or directly to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead** (Mrs. B.L. Owen). Students may place **letters of concern or complaint** in the boxes around School on floor B1, 1 and 3 in the New Building and just inside the School Library door and in the School Music Library. However, although it must be noted that anonymous letters can be more difficult to deal with, they will still be taken seriously. Students and staff have direct access to the '**Be Safe**' box on the Intranet 'drop down' on their log-in screen. Messages go straight to the Designated Safeguarding Lead's 'in box'. Students can also speak to the **Independent Listener** (Jane Leary – telephone number 07849909077), or the **School Counsellors** (make an appointment via the nurses or House staff). Advice is also available on the **school intranet/parent portal**.

**Childline** (0800 1111) details are on display around school. The details of the **Children's Commissioner** (0800 528 0731) are on display around boarding houses. The **Anti-bullying Alliance, Childnet, Kidscape** and **Beat Bullying** are some of the other organisations which provide appropriate guidance. The Anti-Bullying Alliance provides useful resources for student, parents and staff.

Members of staff who learn of alleged bullying behaviour should:

- respond quickly and sensitively by offering advice, support and reassurance to the alleged victim, then
- report the allegation to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- make a record of the complaint
- contact the appropriate members of staff to agree on a strategy and on who will take the lead in managing the matter.

For the duration of any investigation a mutually agreed contact person will be appointed for the alleged victim and the alleged bully(ies).

Unless the case is very serious (when the procedures in paragraph 4.9 below will be followed) the member of staff taking the lead will normally see the victim and any witnesses without delay and form an initial view of the allegation.

The possible outcomes include:

- there has been a misunderstanding which can be explained sympathetically to the alleged victim with advice to the alleged bully
- the complaint is justified in whole or in part, and further action will be needed (see Range of Action, below)
- the complaint is more serious than initially thought and the Designated Safeguarding Lead should be informed to carry out additional investigation in accordance with the procedures below.

In **minor cases** the investigation will commence from a 'no blame' standpoint. This would be noted and monitored/reviewed through the weekly Pastoral meetings.

If the Designated Safeguarding Lead considers that serious bullying behaviour has occurred, they will:

- inform the Joint Principal (NS)
- interview the alleged victim, alleged bully and any witness separately in order to establish the facts of the case (written records of all interviews will be made on CPOMS)

The investigation findings will be reported to the Joint Principal (NS) and other relevant staff. Parents of students involved will be informed and will be asked to attend a meeting to discuss the problem. A decision will be made regarding the involvement of outside agencies, e.g. Manchester Safeguarding Partnership, Police, and other action to be taken (see Range of Action, below). **In serious cases**, such action may include further investigation in accordance with the School's Behaviour and Discipline Policy and the Expulsion, Removal and Review Policy contained herein.

The Joint Principal (NS) will notify the parents of the victim and the bullying and provide details of the action being taken.

## Range of Action

When a complaint of bullying behaviour is upheld, the bully (bullies) will be asked for a genuine apology. Additional action includes:

- The bully (bullies) will be encouraged to address the inappropriate behaviour. Appropriate advice and support will be provided.
- Consideration of the motivation behind the bullying behaviour and whether external services should be used to tackle any underlying issues of the bully which contributed to the bullying behaviour. If these considerations lead to any concerns that the bully may be at risk of harm, the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures will be followed.
- Disciplinary action in accordance with the School's Good Behaviour Manual. In

serious or repeated cases, suspension or even expulsion will be considered. Any disciplinary action will be applied fairly, consistently and reasonably, taking into account any special educational needs or disabilities and the needs of vulnerable students.

- Appropriate support will be offered to the victim(s) and bully(ies). The victim may need guidance on how to change behaviour patterns in order to reduce the likelihood of further bullying. Support from external services will be sought where appropriate.
- Confiscation of mobile electronic devices, increased monitoring procedures or limiting access to the School's internet and email facilities if cyberbullying (see the Acceptable Use Policy).
- Reconciliation of the students concerned, including a supervised meeting between them to discuss their differences and the ways in which they may be able to avoid future conflict.
- Action to break up a "power base".
- Such other action as may appear to the Joint Principal (NS) to be appropriate.

After the incident/s have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored by designated members of staff, and if appropriate, a member of the prefect team, to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

## **Recording**

Reported incidents and the outcomes are recorded on CPOMs, kept securely and evaluated to enable patterns to be identified, both in relation to individual students and across the School as a whole, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the procedures and the School's approach.

## **Prevention**

'Bullying' as a topic will be addressed in PSE lessons, Tutor Group sessions and assemblies. Online safety is also a key aspect of all areas of the curriculum. When appropriate we shall refer to specific organisations / resources and draw on their expertise and materials. We may also include age / stage-appropriate follow up such as:

- writing a set of school guidelines with the students
  - signing a behaviour contract
  - writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying
  - reading stories about bullying or having them read in class or school assembly/watching online links directed by staff
  - making up role-plays
  - having discussions about bullying and why it matters
  - assemblies on Safer Internet use and what to do in response to Cyber-bullying.
- There is also a separate E-safety Policy and Acceptable Use Policy.

A counter-bullying culture can only be realised through the co-operation of staff, students and parents.

## **Review**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will review the Counter-bullying Policy on an annual basis, or more regularly as required taking into account any guidance published by the DfE together with the record of any bullying incidents.

The Governing Body will consider the revisions made as part of its collective responsibility to carry out an annual review of safeguarding.

## References

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/315587/Equality\\_Act\\_Advice\\_Final.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315587/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf)

<https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

## Related Policies

*Child Protection (Safeguarding )*  
*Acceptable Use and E-safety*  
*Complaints*  
*The A-Z*