

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

### CONTENTS

MONITORING AND REVIEW.....	1
LEGAL REFERENCES.....	2
RELATED POLICY .....	2
ANTI-BULLYING CULTURE .....	2
SPECIFIC TYPES OF BULLYING .....	4
Racist Bullying .....	4
Homophobic and Gender Based Bullying .....	4
Special Educational Needs and Disability Bullying.....	4
CYBER-BULLYING – DEFINITION.....	4
SIGNS OF BULLYING .....	4
SCHOOL ACTIONS .....	5
CYBER-BULLYING – PREVENTATIVE MEASURES.....	6
PROCEDURES TO DEAL WITH BULLYING.....	7
Senior House.....	7
Prep School.....	7
WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD DO .....	7
WHAT PARENTS SHOULD DO.....	7
BULLYING INCIDENT RESPONSE.....	8
SANCTIONS .....	8
APPENDIX A - ANTI-BULLYING PROCEDURES.....	10

### MONITORING AND REVIEW

Staff Responsible	Jo Kingston – Senior Deputy Head
Reviewed by	SLT
Approved by	SLT
Frequency of Review	Annually
Date of Last Review	May 2022
Date of Next Review	May 2023

The School refers to all staff and students in St Mary's School, which includes the Early Years/Foundations Stage (EYFS), the Preparatory Department (Years 1-6), Senior House (Years 7-11) and the Sixth Form (Years 12-13).

The term 'parent' refers to those who have parental responsibility for a child.

## AIMS

- To demonstrate that the school takes bullying seriously and that it will not be tolerated
- To take measures to prevent all forms of bullying in the school and on off-site activities
- To support everyone in actions to identify bullying and protect those who have been involved
- To demonstrate to all that the safety and happiness of students is enhanced by dealing positively with bullying
- To promote an environment where to tell someone about bullying is **not** an offence and students feel safe and confident to do so
- To promote self-esteem and positive attitudes in students so that they feel better equipped to challenge bullying behaviour

## LEGAL REFERENCES

This policy operates within a wider national framework, which includes:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- SEND Regulations 2014
- SEND Code of Practice 2015
- KCSIE 2021
- Department for Education – Preventing and Tackling Bullying 2017
- Department for Education – Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence 2002

## RELATED POLICY

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- PSHCE Policy

## ANTI-BULLYING CULTURE

St Mary's School values the good relationships that are encouraged by the School and embodied in our Behaviour Code, which has been drawn up by the students themselves and the STAGS guidance in the Preparatory School. Every allegation of bullying, including cyber-bullying and bullying outside the school, will be taken seriously. We acknowledge the negative psychological effects that bullying can have on individuals and the learning environment, and that bullying can cause, in extreme cases, suicide. We will strive to create an environment free from fear. Bullying is unacceptable in this school and will not be tolerated. We recognise that to condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

*"Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumours, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose." (stopbullying.gov.org)*

A more child-friendly definition of bullying might be:

*Bullying is when you keep picking on someone because you think you're cooler, smarter, stronger or better than them.*

Bullying is handled with understanding and fairness at St. Mary's. We aim to change the attitude of bullies and guide them to more acceptable behaviour. With everyone working together this is possible:

- Bullying is not tolerated at St. Mary's School. It occurs when someone is deliberately hurt or is being upset by others, regularly or over a given time, e.g. aggressive physical behaviour, deliberately excluding someone from a group, threatening or disrespectful behaviour, spreading malicious gossip or rumour, continual teasing
- All cases of bullying must be reported to a member of staff as soon as possible, perhaps through a parent or Senior girl. Incidents will always be investigated.
- Because bullying is unacceptable, any incidents are regarded as a serious matter. Each case is dealt with on an individual basis
- In cases of bullying, the School will work in partnership with parents and, ~~in severe cases,~~ if there is reasonable cause to believe a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm with external agencies such as children's social care and/or police.
- Everyone in the School community is equally important and has the right to feel comfortable, happy and valued. Bullying can be prevented if all members of St Mary's work together and respect each other. This complies with the spirit of the European Convention on Human Rights and with the active promotion of values at the School
- Bullying on the basis of protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation) will be taken particularly seriously.

The School also recognises that it must take note of bullying perpetrated outside the school which spills over into the school. The school will do what is reasonably practicable to eliminate any such bullying.

Students, staff and parents may be perpetrators or victims of bullying. Bullying can take many forms including but not limited to:

- Physical (e.g. pushing, hitting, kicking, theft of or hiding belongings, invasion of personal space)
- Verbal (name calling, teasing, insulting remarks for example on race, sexual orientation, religion, cultural differences or gender, unkind notes)
- Social or psychological (spreading nasty stories or untrue rumours, exclusion from a group, staring in an intimidating manner)
- Online, phone calls, emails, SMS, social networking, videoing, photography,
- Inter-relationship bullying between classes/groups

Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'. Equally, abuse issues can sometimes be gender specific e.g. girls being sexually touched/assaulted and boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence (KCSIE, 2021). It is important to consider

the forms abuse may take and the subsequent actions required. See appendix three of our Child Protection policy for further details.

## SPECIFIC TYPES OF BULLYING

### **Racist Bullying**

This type of bullying is when an individual is targeted for representing a group based on colour, background, culture or religion. This type of bullying can take the following forms:

Name calling, racist jokes, graffiti, offensive mimicry, physical threats/attacks, provocative use of badges, racist literature, inciting others to be racist and refusing to co-operate in lessons or extracurricular activities with others.

We recognise that racist bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

### **Homophobic and Gender Based Bullying**

Students do not necessarily have to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender fluid to experience bullying around sexual orientation or gender. This type of bullying can take the form of any of the aforementioned behaviour.

### **Special Educational Needs and Disability Bullying**

This type of bullying can take the form of any of the aforementioned behaviour.

## CYBER-BULLYING – DEFINITION

Mr Bill Belsey, the creator of the website: <http://www.cyberbullying.org/> defined this unpleasant phenomenon in the following terms:

*"Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others."*

Cyber-bullying can involve but is not limited to social networking sites, emails and mobile phones.

## SIGNS OF BULLYING

Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour

- Unwillingness to return to school
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing or are damaged
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary)
- Psychological damage and diminished levels of self-confidence
- Frequent visits to the Medical/Student Room with symptoms such as stomach pains or headaches
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, or late arrival to class
- Choosing the company of adults
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping, or experiencing nightmares
- Talking of self-harm, suicide or running away

## SCHOOL ACTIONS

To encourage a culture in line with our aims, the School will ensure that:

- An anti-bullying programme will form part of the PSHCEE curriculum (Nursery -Y13), Circle Time and pastoral sessions (Prep School) and assemblies which raise awareness, promote self-esteem and refer to the anti-bullying policy in age appropriate terms. Other vehicles such as Drama lessons and projects will also be used
- Discussions surrounding such issues will take place in form times in the Senior House
- The Behaviour Code will be available in every form room.
- Staff and students are expected to treat each other with tolerance and respect.
- The School will challenge racist or homophobic language, acknowledge diversity and difference and offer confidential support for students bullied on the grounds of their sexuality or who are sexually harassed.
- Students will be encouraged to keep a record of any bullying via text, email or messaging services. They will be informed about police best practice for dealing with online communication via their PSHCEE lessons and ICT lessons
- The School will avoid drawing undue attention to differences of LDD (Learning Difficulties or Disabilities) students
- The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed, in part, via student voice for example in anonymous surveys and PHSCE discussions.
- Pastoral displays will highlight the importance of treating others with fairness and respect
- Pastoral system: girls are encouraged to confide in Form Tutors or Senior Staff in Senior House and Class Teachers, Teaching Assistants or Senior Staff in the Early Years and Prep School
- Regular school assemblies address the issue including Anti-Bullying week
- Academic and co-curricular successes are celebrated in all types of assemblies and feedback in lessons
- Kindness and empathy are promoted as part of SMS Spirit and praise points awarded.
- St Mary's School has adopted the Girls on Board approach to deal with friendship issues and to equip the students with the skills to resolve difficulties appropriately rather than escalating them.
- The school discourages any exclusive or unfriendly behaviour by staff, and staff are required to adhere to the staff code of conduct.
- A provision of a range of co-curricular activities

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will liaise with the Headmistress over all anti-bullying cases and sanctions
- The DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) will report termly to the nominated governor for child protection
- An anti-bullying log is kept to identify any patterns or repeated behaviour, and so that if required, appropriate actions can be taken on a year group/whole school level to promote a positive culture of respect and tolerance, where all students are free from fear.
- There will be regular staff training and support for all staff to raise awareness, including protected characteristics and online safety.
- We will have a Buddy system and Sixth Form prefect system in Senior House, playground leaders, friendship bench and Kindness Cup in Prep. Student Voice box in both sections
- Staff should use seating plans up to and including KS3 and they should be used where appropriate in KS4 and KS5
- Staff supervision begins from 8.00 am (see supervision policy with SLT on duty), and includes break and lunch time. After school, girls are supervised either in Late Prep, Busy Bees or registered in co-curricular clubs
- All girls are aware of their safe places to go e.g. School library, Student Room

## CYBER-BULLYING – PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

In addition to the preventative measures described above, St Mary's School:

- Expects all students to adhere to its Acceptable Use Policy. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and ICT support, the DSL will check student use. Teachers will monitor students' use of devices within lessons. We will impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet
- Issues all students with their own personal school email address. Access to sites or personal email not permitted except where the use of their device depends on this up to Year 11.
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyber-bullying in ICT and PSHCE lessons, which covers blocking and removing contacts from "buddy" lists
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe and private
- Mobile phones are handed in at registration each morning, stored securely in the School Office and returned at afternoon registration
- No filming or photographing of any girl or member of staff is allowed except at the express direction of a member of staff and then with a clear educational purpose

In addition, St Mary's School raises Parents' Awareness of e-safety and cyberbullying, including how to respond through newsletters, dedicated resources on firefly and parents' seminars.

Further details are given in our Students use of ICT, Mobile Phones and other Electronic Devices Policy and in our Internet Safety Policy. All mobile phones will be kept switched off in the EYFS setting.

**All Staff will:**

- Know the policy and procedures
- Be observant and ask students what is happening to them
- Deal with incidents according to the procedures
- Never let any incidences of bullying pass by unreported, whether on-site or during an off-site activity

## PROCEDURES TO DEAL WITH BULLYING

All reported incidents will be treated seriously and fully investigated; all parties will be heard and given appropriate support.

### Senior House

If a member of staff witnesses overt bullying, as defined above, the incident should immediately be reported to the appropriate Head of Year/Section or DSL. A member of staff who is informed of any bullying should report the incident to the appropriate Head of Year/Section or DSL who will then investigate by contacting all the parties concerned and document the incident (see procedure in appendix A). If the incident is of a serious nature or repeated, the Headmistress will be informed immediately. Any incidents involving members of staff should be reported directly to the Headmistress. Written records of all proceedings should be kept in school files to enable patterns to be identified. All bullying is recorded on a central register. Incidents are kept on the student's central file/iSAMS well-being module.

### Prep School

If any member of staff or School helper witnesses overt bullying as defined above, the incident should immediately be reported to the class teacher, who should then inform a senior member of staff. The senior member of staff will speak with the girls involved and take written notes of the incident. If the incident is of a serious nature, the Head of the Prep School will be informed immediately. Any incidents involving members of staff should be reported directly to the Headmistress. A written log of all such incidents is kept by the Deputy Head and the Head of Prep and incidents are kept on the student's file/iSAMS well-being module.

## WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD DO

If a student witnesses or experiences bullying, the incident should immediately be reported to any member of staff. Girls are encouraged to be upstanders to prevent further incidents and confide in Form Tutors and Senior Staff in Senior House and Class Teachers, Teaching Assistants or Senior Staff in the Prep Department. Students must keep a record of any bullying via text, email or messaging services. All reported incidents will be treated seriously and fully investigated; all parties will be heard and given appropriate support.

## WHAT PARENTS SHOULD DO

If you suspect your daughter is being bullied you should:

- Listen and try to provide an open, non-judgemental environment for your daughter to talk about her problem
- Tell her you understand and give her support. Remind her she has the right to feel safe

- Suggest your daughter speak to a member of staff
- If the problem seems particularly serious, or ongoing, contact the Form Tutor, Head of Year or Head of Section immediately
- Try to avoid an angry or emotional response
- Parents should realise that actions such as contacting the parent of the alleged bully and discussing the matter with other parents can inflame the situation
- Contact the school straight away if the issue continues to be unresolved
- Trust the school to carry through actions that will solve the problem
- Youth Produced Sexual Imagery – nudes and semi nudes (also known as sexting) – do not ask to look at the image. If you are shown the image, close the device immediately; do not forward the image onto someone or via email or to another device. You can then contact School or the Police (101) and ask for further advice

## BULLYING INCIDENT RESPONSE

When bullying is found to have occurred appropriate action will be taken to:

- Ensure the immediate safety and well-being of those involved
- Provide ongoing support and counselling for those involved
- Inform the individual who has been responsible for the bullying that this behaviour is unacceptable
- Counsel the individual to understand the implications of bullying
- Establish whether further support and/or counselling are required to rectify behaviour
- Advise the individual of the consequences of further bullying
- Apply the appropriate sanctions to the relevant parties according to the behaviour policy
- Inform the parents
- Follow up with the individuals to provide any necessary support

Please see the “Anti-Bullying Procedures” appendix at the end of this document

## SANCTIONS

Parents will be invited in to discuss the matter with their child present and appropriate action will be taken. Disciplinary sanctions may include Saturday detention, formal warning and contract of good behaviour, ‘community service’ or suspension, removal of privileges or specific supervision and there may also be a requirement that the bully has specialist counselling. In serious or repeated incidents, a disciplinary hearing will be held which could result in suspension or expulsion.



In all cases, both the victim and the perpetrator will be monitored until such a time as both parties are confident the situation is resolved to the School's satisfaction.

In all instances, both victim and perpetrator will receive support through the pastoral system; the former to ensure the restoration of self-confidence and in the case of the latter to investigate underlying causes of and ensure a fuller understanding of their behaviour.

## APPENDIX A - ANTI-BULLYING PROCEDURES

1. Report made. This may come from staff, parents or students
2. In case of isolated incident, record made and any evolving patterns identified
3. Where bullying is suspected, students, including witnesses, to provide separate written accounts of incidents
4. Investigation and discussion with pastoral team
5. Students interviewed with a member of the pastoral team
6. Parents informed if appropriate
7. Pastoral support/counselling offered to victim if needed.
8. Strategy devised – according to situation, including use of agreements e.g. agreement between the students and member of staff about they will behave going forwards.
9. Perpetrator interviewed with parents
  - i) Sanctions agreed and counselling offered
  - ii) Support strategies in school identified and implemented
  - iii) Victim and perpetrator – continually monitored until after it has been satisfactorily resolved
9. In case of groups a mediator may be used
10. If a child has suffered or likely to suffer significant harm the DSL will be involved and liaise with external agencies such as children's social care and/or police.