

ST BERNARD'S HIGH SCHOOL



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Original Draft: *March 2006*

Updated: *February 2012*
 September 2016
 February 2019
 May 2019

Adopted by Teaching & Learning: 28 February 2023

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Chair of Governors

Next Review due: Feb 2026

Mission Statement

St Bernard's is a school community that aims to live by Jesus' commandment, "Love one another as I have loved you."

We are a Catholic learning community committed to the on-going development of the entire potential of every person, achieved through a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum.

We care for each other as individuals of equal worth, regardless of status, sex, race or religion and thus actively seek to promote safeguarding, justice and fairness.

We provide an atmosphere in which all can grow in our Faith, and encourage this faith by a lively relevant liturgy.

We work with parent/carers, parishes, local communities and industry to prepare our students for the opportunities of adulthood.

Definition

St Bernard's High School understands bullying to be behaviour that deliberately attempts to cause distress to another person; it may be physical, verbal, psychological or emotional, racist or sexual. It may involve both the spoken and written word including text messages, the use of homophobic language, social networking sites, and voice mail, via mobile phones and email. It may carry on for a short time or an extended period; it often flourishes in an atmosphere of secrecy and fear.

We respect the rights of each individual in accordance with the Equal Opportunities Policy of the school to ensure that the differences are respected and valued, not mocked. Bullying is a widespread social problem and can be found in any school environment amongst both students and the staff.

Bullying is not acceptable behaviour in this school and we expect everyone to work together to ensure that an incidence of bullying is brought out in the open, treated seriously and dealt with appropriately and decisively.

We aim to create an atmosphere in which students and staff who feel bullied, or see bullying occurring, have the confidence to tell a responsible person what is going on, secure in the knowledge that they will be listened to and believed and that steps will be taken to resolve the situation.

Parents should inform the school if they have concerns about their child being bullied or being a bully. Parents and teachers should be encouraged to work together to enable students to achieve solutions to these problems.

As part of the PSHE programme in Years 7 – 11, students discuss issues of bullying (including cyber bullying) so that they can develop an understanding of the feelings of both the victim and the aggressor and the long term harm that bullying causes. Students are encouraged to understand that it is right to seek help to resolve difficulties of this kind and should have confidence that the issue will be dealt with sensitively.

Counselling help will be sought for those students involved in bullying - both those who bully and those who are being bullied. The level of help will vary, from staff and peers to use of

outside support from the **School Nurse, Catholic Children's Society** and in more serious cases **Social Care Child and Family Consultation Service**, depending on the specific circumstances and the needs of those involved. If required, Early Help Assessments (EHA's) will be completed by the most appropriate member of staff to ensure support from these agencies.

In addition, trained 'Peer Mentors' have been set up in Year 10 and can be called upon to assist younger students.

Physical violence of any kind is not acceptable within this school and will lead to a suspension.

The following procedures are an outline of how bullying incidents are dealt with in school:

- ensure that bullies and victims are interviewed separately;
- obtain witness information;
- keep a written record of the incident, investigations and outcomes;
- inform relevant members of staff about the incident where a student is involved;
- ensure that action is taken to prevent further incidents.

Such action may include:

- imposition of sanctions (in accordance with the School Behaviour Policy);
- obtaining an apology;
- informing parents of both bully and bullied;
- providing appropriate training;
- providing mentor support for both victim and bully.

Bullying can irrevocably damage the mental health of an individual and we will do all in our power to eradicate bullying from our school.

A record of major incidents will be maintained in order to establish the frequency and type of such difficulties and to assist staff in developing appropriate approaches to combat such problems.

Focus groups meet termly and the issue of bullying has been incorporated into the questions. The results of this are analysed and findings reported by the Deputy Head Teacher to SLT.

On the rare occasions where systematic long term bullying is exposed, the matter will be dealt with by the Head Teacher and in consultation with the Head of Year brought to the **Governors' Student Disciplinary Committee**.

Logging Incidents of Bullying

All incidents of bullying are logged using the school's monitoring process.

Student Planners contain this page:

Bullying

The bullying of another student by word or deed, by an individual or group, will always be regarded as most serious misconduct.

Bullying is an action that deliberately causes distress to another person. This means the bully knows that their actions/words are upsetting, but keep on doing it because that is how they want you to feel.

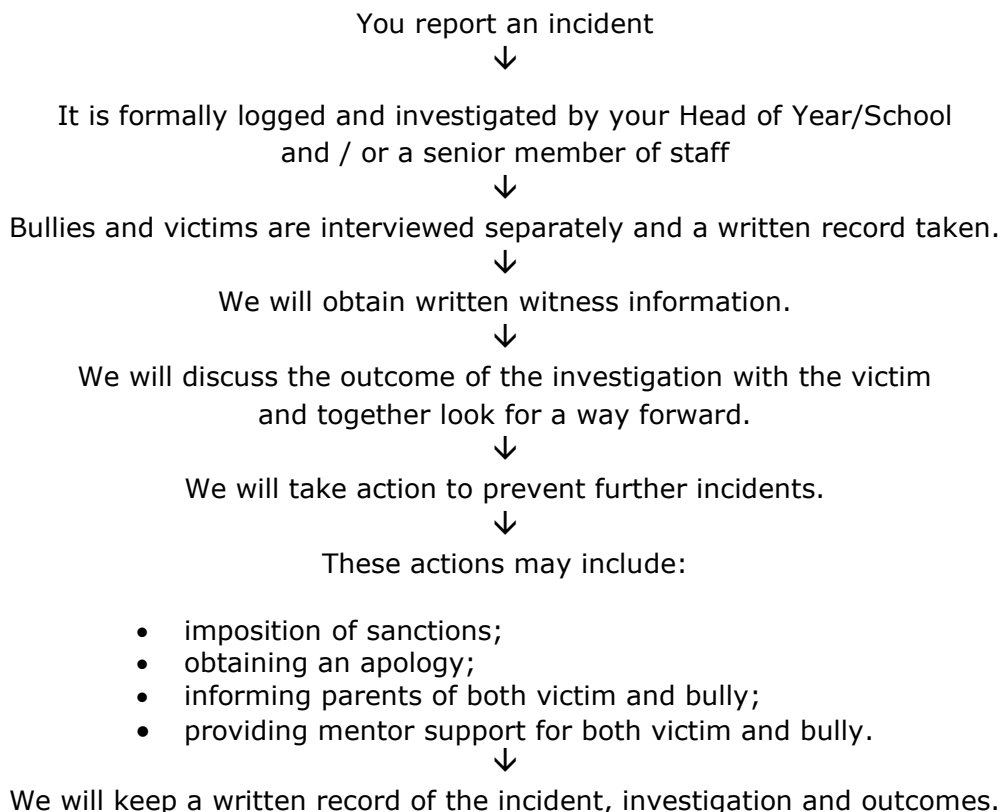
Bullying can be:-

- physical – for example hitting, kicking and pushing;
- verbal – words they say to you;
- taking of, or deliberate damage to somebody's property;
- cyber – sending defamatory or intimidating messages or images in any form of communication technology – for example, text message, Snapchat, Instagram;
- harassment of another student or person in relation to their age, race, religious belief, special educational needs or disabilities, sexual orientation, gender, gender re-assignment, pregnancy/maternity and marriage civil partnership.

To read in conjunction with the following policies:

- cyber-bullying;
- behaviour.

Flow Chart to Show the Procedure for Dealing with Bullying



On rare occasions, where long-term bullying is exposed, the matter will be dealt with by the Head Teacher and, in consultation with the Head of Year/School, be brought to the Governors' Student Disciplinary Committee.

In addition, trained 'Peer Mentors' have been set up in Year 10 and can be called upon to assist younger students.

Counselling help will be sought for those students involved in bullying – both those who bully and those who are being bullied. The level of help will vary, from staff and peers to use of outside support from the Educational Welfare Office (EWO), the School Nurse, Catholic Children's Society and in more serious cases Social Care Child and Family Consultation Service, depending on the specific circumstances and the needs of those involved. If required, a Common Assessment Form (EHA) will be completed by the most appropriate member of staff to ensure support from these agencies.

Physical violence of any kind is not acceptable within this school and will lead to exclusion.

DEALING WITH CYBER-BULLYING

Understanding and discussion

- The Deputy Head Teacher (Pastoral) is responsible for overseeing the practices and procedures outlined in this policy and for monitoring its effectiveness.
- Staff receive training in identifying cyberbullying and understanding their responsibilities.
- All staff will be helped to keep up-to-date with the technologies that children are using.
- Students will be educated about cyberbullying through a variety of means: Assemblies, conferences, Anti-bullying Week, projects (Computing, PSHE, Drama, English), etc.
- Students sign a Code of Conduct for ICT.
- Parents will be asked to sign an Acceptable Use Policy before their children are allowed to use the internet in school and will be asked to confirm that they have discussed its contents with their children.
- Students, staff and parents will be involved in evaluating and improving policies and procedures.

Policies and Practices

- Ensure regular review and update of existing policies to include cyberbullying where appropriate.
- Provide opportunities for policies to be addressed and for students to be involved in the process of updating and improving them.
- Keep good records of all cyberbullying incidents.
- Keep policies under review as technologies develop.
- Publicise rules and sanctions effectively.

Promoting the positive use of Technology

- Make positive use of technology across the curriculum.
- Use CPD opportunities to help staff develop their practice creatively and support students in safe and responsible use.
- Explore ways of using technology to support assertiveness, self-esteem and to develop friendships.
- Ensure all staff and students understand the importance of password security and the need to log out of accounts.

Making reporting easier

- Ensure staff can recognise non-verbal and indications of cyberbullying.
- Publicise and promote the message that asking for help is the right thing to do and shows strength and good judgment.
- Publicise to all members of the school community the ways in which cyberbullying can be reported.
- Provide information for 'bystanders' including reassurances about protection from becoming victims themselves.
- Provide information on external report routes, e.g. mobile phone company, internet service provider, Childline.

RESPONDING TO CYBER-BULLYING

Most cases of cyberbullying will be dealt with through the school's Behaviour Policy. Some features of cyberbullying differ from other forms of bullying and may prompt a particular response. The key differences are:

- Impact: The scale and scope of cyberbullying can be greater than other forms of bullying.
- Targets and perpetrators: The people involved may have a different profile to traditional bullies and their targets.
- Location: The 24/7 and anywhere nature of cyberbullying.
- Anonymity: The person being bullied will not always know who is bullying them.
- Motivation: Some students may not be aware that what they are doing is bullying.
- Evidence: Unlike other forms of bullying, the target of the bullying will have evidence of its occurrence.
- It is possible that a member of staff and other adults may be a victim and these responses apply to them too.

Support for the person being bullied

- Offer emotional support; reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling.
- Advise the person not to retaliate or reply. Instead, keep the evidence and take it to their parent or a member of staff.
- Advise the person to consider what information they have in the public domain.
- Unless the victim sees it as a punishment, they may be advised to change, e.g. mobile phone number.
- If hurtful or embarrassing content is being distributed, try to get it removed from the web. If the person who posted it is known, ensure they understand why it is wrong and ask them to remove it. Alternatively, contact the host provider and make a report to get the content taken down.
- Confiscate mobile phone, ask student to delete the offending content and say who they have sent it on to.
- Contact the police in cases of actual / suspected illegal content.
- In some cases, the person being bullied may be able to block the person bullying from their sites and services. Appendix 1 contains information on what service providers can do and how to contact them.

Investigation

- Staff and students should be advised to preserve evidence and a record of abuse; save phone messages, record or save-and-print instant messenger conversations, print or produce a screen-grab of social network pages, print, save and forward to staff whole email messages.
- If images are involved, determine whether they might be illegal or raise child protection concerns. If so, contact: Internet Watch Foundation (www.imf.org.uk), the local police or the London Safeguarding Children Board Officer.
- Identify the bully. See Appendix 2 for guidance.
- Any allegations against staff should be handled as other allegations following guidance in Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education.

Working with the bully and applying sanctions

The aim of the sanctions will be:

- To help the person harmed to feel safe again and be assured that the bullying will stop.

- To hold the perpetrator to account, getting them to recognise the harm caused and deter them from repeating the behaviour.
- To demonstrate to the school community that cyberbullying is unacceptable and that the school has effective ways of dealing with it, so deterring others from behaving similarly.
- Sanctions for any breaches of policies or internet / mobile phone agreements will be applied.
- In applying sanctions, consideration must be given to type and impact of bullying and the possibility that it was unintentional or was in retaliation.
- The outcome must include helping the bully to recognise the consequence of their actions and providing support to enable the attitude and behaviour of the bully to change.

Evaluating the effectiveness of prevention measures

- Use the School Council to hear the students' point of view.
- Identify areas for improvement and incorporate students' ideas.
- Conduct an annual evaluation including a review of recorded cyberbullying incidents, a survey of student and staff experiences and a parent satisfaction survey.
- Publicise evaluation findings; celebrate what works and what improvements are planned.

Legal duties and powers

- The school has a duty to protect all its members and provide a safe, healthy environment.
- Head Teachers have the power 'to such extent as is reasonable' to regulate the conduct of students when they are off-site or not under the control or charge of a member of staff (Education and Inspections Act 2006).
- School staff may request a student to reveal a message or other phone content and may confiscate a phone; they may not search the contents of the phone unless the school's discipline policy expressly states that right.
- Some cyberbullying activities could be criminal offences under a range of different laws including Protection from Harassment Act 1997.