

In line with our Mission Statement we believe that all pupils have the right to be safe and happy in school, and protected when they are feeling vulnerable.

Aim:

It is the aim of the school to eradicate distress suffered by any pupil as a result of bullying from any source. Bullying (physical or emotional) is always a serious issue and if not dealt with can cause psychological damage. **This policy therefore aims to help all staff to deal with bullying when it occurs, and more importantly to prevent bullying. Bullying will not be dismissed as banter or teasing.**

This policy applies to all pupils in the school, including in EYFS.

Due regard has been paid to 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying 2017' and 'Cyberbullying: advice for head teachers and school staff 2014'

In line with the Equality Duty, Notre Dame has due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Definition of bullying:

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, 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 Notre Dame's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; teachers have to make their own judgements about each specific case.

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.

Low level disruption and the use of offensive language can itself have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged, or dismissed as banter or horseplay, it can also lead to reluctance to support other behaviour. Early intervention can help to set clear expectations of the behaviour that is or isn't acceptable and help stop negative behaviours escalating.

Bullying can take many forms, these include:

- Racial
- Religious
- Cultural
- Sexual / sexist
- Homophobic
- Disability
- Special or differing educational needs

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.

The wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 give teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones. There is no need to obtain parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone.

If an electronic device, that is prohibited by the school rules, has been seized and the member of staff has reasonable grounds to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence, they must give the device to the DSL (Assistant Head: Pastoral) who will inform the police as soon as is reasonably practicable. Material on the device that is suspected to be evidence relevant to an offence, or that is a pornographic image of a child or an extreme pornographic image, should not be deleted prior to giving the device to the police. If a staff member finds material that they do not suspect contains evidence in relation to an offence, but is still concerning they should decide, along with Assistant Head: Pastoral and Headteacher, whether it is appropriate to delete or retain the material as evidence of a breach of school discipline.

Students below Year 10 are not allowed to bring in their own computers. Mobile phone use by students below Sixth Form is not allowed during the school day. Staff are required to be vigilant when students are using computers in a learning context.

The e-safety policy and the acceptable use policy give more details of processes and procedures.

For more information on this please consult the Department for Education's 2014 document: 'Cyberbullying: Advice for head teachers and school staff'

Procedure

When a bullying incident is reported it should be taken seriously and dealt with according to the immediate response chart. (Attached)

Records of the complaint, interviews and any follow up actions of sanctions should be kept in the profile folders of pupils involved, and a copy should be given to the DSL/ Assistant Head Pastoral (Ms Rebecca Golding for the Prep School and Ms Amanda Ford for the Senior School) so that patterns or further incidents can be identified and dealt with immediately. A referral may also be made to the Head of Learning Support (SENCO). Details remain confidential, but it is essential that any staff dealing with children involved should have a clear picture of events so that they can be aware of how best to support the victim, and indeed the bully.

In the event of severe and persistent bullying it may be necessary to consider exclusion from the school. A severe bullying incident may be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Where this is the case, the school staff should report their concerns to the Assistant Head Pastoral who will contact the local authority children's social care. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, schools may need to draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

Regular training of staff in anti-bullying, including where necessary in understanding the needs of pupils with SEN is undertaken and details of the policy discussed regularly. Staff arriving during the school year will also have to read the policy and acknowledge this.

Action is taken to reduce the risk of bullying at times and in places where it is most likely by assigning staff to duties at break and lunchtimes.

Pastoral care is a priority provided by the Pastoral Team of Heads of Year and Form Tutors/Class Teachers led by the Assistant Head Pastoral. Pupils, staff or parents may contact them to discuss any pastoral issue. This team is also supported by the School Chaplain, Peer Mentors and School Nurse.

The Executive team and SLT are immediately responsible for setting the code of expected behaviour (see Staff Handbook)

Pupils and staff are made aware that there is no place for bullying behaviour in the school and that it will not be tolerated

In Assemblies and PSHEE students are encouraged to develop respect for other people. All staff have a role to play in ensuring that anti bullying is constantly on the agenda for RE/PSHEE/Form discussion. All staff will ensure that the immediate response chart is followed in the event of an incident

Staff (especially Year Heads and SLT) must ensure that the behaviour policy is followed with regard to implementing sanctions reflecting the seriousness of an incident

Values of respect and kindness towards both staff and other students and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others permeate our whole school community. These are of course reinforced by our commitment to living by Gospel Values as a 'Company of Our Lady Mary' School.

Pupils must be made to feel that their complaints will be listened to and acted upon quickly. Pupils should understand how to ask for help by talking to a big sister, peer mentor, Form Tutor/Class Teacher, Head of Year or other trusted member of staff.

Parents should be encouraged to report incidents directly to the school rather than to other parents. Parents should be involved in discussions about sanctions where their own children are shown to be bullying.

The anti-bullying and behaviour policy is communicated to pupils and staff and is provided on the website for parents.

Logging all reports of bullying is carried out centrally by the Assistant Head (Pastoral) in the Senior school and Pastoral Director in the Prep school and the records are reviewed to monitor the effectiveness of the policy.

Bullying outside school premises

Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises "to such an extent as is reasonable". 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 should be investigated and acted on. The head teacher should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying the teacher can only discipline the pupil on school premises or elsewhere when the pupil is under the lawful control of the staff member.

The Head will deal with complaints against staff. A copy of the **disciplinary procedure** is available in the office.

Further sources of information/ guidance/ advice see **D for E Preventing and Tackling Bullying July 2017**

Reviewed by Jan Slade and Helen Evans January 2015, Anna King Feb 2015, April 2016 and Jan 2017 and Amanda Ford and Anna King Sept 2017

Due for review: September 2018

Linked policies:

Safeguarding Policy

Behaviour policy

PSHEE policy

E-Safety policy

Acceptable use policy

Teaching handbook, duties

Report of Bullying Immediate Response Chart - PREP

Child reports incident(s) to adult
(posters to this effect on classroom walls)

Adult reassures the pupil and makes decision regarding seriousness of incident. If possible the adult will respond and deal with the incident: speak to all parties involved and help them come to an amicable resolution underlying our school policy that bullying is not acceptable.

If the adult considers the incident more serious he/she refers it on to the Class Teacher. If possible the Class Teacher will respond and deal with the incident: speak to all parties involved and help them come to an amicable resolution underlying our school policy that bullying is not acceptable. A class PSHEE lesson may be arranged to help the class understand and talk through the issue.

If the issue persists the Class Teacher may refer the matter to the Assistant Head via a 'Cause for Concern' sheet. The Assistant Head will speak to all parties involved and help them come to an amicable resolution underlying our school policy that bullying is not acceptable. Very serious incidents will be reported in the 'Red Book' and an improvement plan will be put in place and monitored on a daily basis for an agreed period of time and then reviewed. Examples may include being encouraged to play with a different friend, not to phone the aggrieved party out of school hours, to meet with the Assistant Head, to be withdrawn from activities (including play time), to carry a 'Report Book' to all lessons for staff to enter a comment on behaviour, etc.

If the issue is still not resolved the Assistant Head, in consultation with the Head, will inform the parents of the pupil who is bullying and they will work together to address the issue with the clear understanding that bullying is not acceptable.

In an extreme case where none of these measures have been effective the pupil may be suspended from attending school for a specified period of time.



Prep response poster:



If you are unhappy
because someone is being
unkind or unfriendly —
tell your teacher
— or another adult—
they will listen and help



Immediate Response Chart

