

Anti-Bullying and Anti-Cyber-bullying Policy Senior School

2025 / 2026



Ibstock Place

CO-EDUCATIONAL DAY SCHOOL

IBSTOCK PLACE SCHOOL

Anti-Bullying and Anti-Cyber-bullying Policy

Senior School

Scope

This policy applies to all Senior School pupils and staff at Ibstock Place School (hereinafter 'Ibstock' or 'the School').

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body delegates responsibility to the Head for developing and enacting any required "Good Practice" policies. These policies are non-statutory and do not require ratification by the Governing Body. As such, the Head has delegated accountability and responsibility for the operationalisation of this policy to the Deputy Head (Pastoral), who ensures the consistent application and implementation of this policy across the School. Staff should follow the expectations set out in this policy.

Introduction

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 can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming which can include the use of images or videos), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on the grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities 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 a school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; teachers and schools have to make their own judgements about each specific case.

What is child-on-child abuse?

Bullying and child-on-child abuse can, and do, overlap in terms of behaviour between individuals and it is important this is recognised by both staff and pupils. Children can abuse other children. This is referred to as child-on-child abuse and can take many forms. This can include (but is not limited to; bullying (including cyberbullying); sexual violence and sexual harassment; physical abuse or otherwise causing physical harm; sexting and initiating

hazing-type violence and rituals. Appendix 2 of this policy outlines the procedure for responding to reports of sexual violence and harassment between children.

In summary: child-on-child abuse occurs when a young person is exploited, bullied and / or harmed by another child. Up until August 2022, child-on-child abuse had been referred to as peer-on-peer abuse, but in recent iterations of KCSIE the terminology has been changed to better reflect that abuse between children can occur at any age, not just between children of the same age.

- Handling allegations of child-on-child sexual harassment
- Handling allegations of child-on-child discrimination

The governors and staff at Ibstock Place School seek to eliminate all forms of bullying and child-on-child abuse but are not ignorant to the fact that bullying ‘could happen here’.

The School’s zero-tolerance approach

The School adopts a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse/bullying. This means that **all** staff should challenge and report all forms of child-on-child abuse when it is seen or heard within the School community. Further to this, the School should act as though incidents of child-on-child abuse are happening even when there are no specific reports. As part of their Safeguarding Training, Ibstock staff are asked to approach their safeguarding responsibilities with the following phrases in mind:

- ‘Safeguarding is **everyone’s** responsibility’
- ‘It could happen here’
- ‘Report the niggling doubt’
- ‘Think the unthinkable’
- ‘Nip the problem in the bud’

Victim reassurance

No victim of child-on-child abuse should ever be made to feel ashamed, all staff must do everything within their power to support any pupil making a disclosure and ensure that they are listened to and that the wishes of the victim are considered in terms of how to proceed.

Policy

- The School acknowledges that bullying can take place between pupils, between pupils and staff, or between staff; by individuals or groups; face-to-face, indirectly or using a range of cyberbullying methods. The guidance set out in this document focuses on all forms of bullying and child-on-child abuse involving pupils, although much of it applies also to other kinds of bullying. For example, the School recognizes that staff who are bullied can suffer from stress and breakdown and acknowledges its protective duties towards staff.
- This policy applies to all pupils and staff in the Senior School and applies to activities at School, on School trips or if the consequences of actions elsewhere impact on a person's capacity to engage in one's life in an appropriate fashion.
- This policy pays due attention to guidance contained in the following publications:
 - Preventing and Tackling Bullying DfE July 2017
 - Searching, screening and confiscation DfE (2022)
 - Behaviour and discipline in schools DfE (2024)
 - Online abuse and bullying prevention guide NSPCC (Home Office) March 2015
 - Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying review Natcen GEO DfE Oct 2014
 - Keeping children safe in Education DfE September 2025
- This policy has been developed in consultation with pupil focus groups and key members of the School's Pastoral Team.

Aims and objectives

At Ibstock Place School, our community is based upon kindness, respect, good manners and fair play. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so that every one of our pupils can develop his or her full potential. We expect our pupils to be courteous towards and co-operative with members of staff so they can learn in a relaxed but orderly atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other. Parents have an important role in supporting the School in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that School and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together. Acceptance of this policy forms part of our standard terms and conditions.

If bullying is taking place, it is important that there is confidence in being able to report it to the appropriate member(s) of staff. Ibstock Place School does not support the notion in any way that bullying is an inevitable part of growing up. This policy aims to outline the various reporting mechanisms the School has in place.

Types of bullying

Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, which has the intention of hurting, harming, harassing or humiliating another person.

For an action to be considered as Bullying it must meet the following criteria:

- Deliberate (intent)
- Offensive or Aggressive
- Unwarranted
- Causes another person to suffer

Bullying can be categorized into three areas, but it is important to recognise that these are not distinct from one another, and this is not an exhaustive list:

Physical: Actions including but not limited to hitting, kicking, taking possessions and touching in a sexual way.

and/or

Verbal: Name calling and insults, including comments made on social websites, mobile telephones, text messages, photographs and email. Bullying may involve actions or comments that are racist, discriminatory, prejudiced, sexual/sexist, homophobic, which focus on disabilities, gender, sexuality, religious beliefs or cultural differences and physical attributes (such as hair or body shape). Those with Special Educational Needs and or Disabilities are particularly vulnerable

and/or

Emotional: Excluding someone from a social group, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve coercion and/or manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation.

Bullying is often hidden and subtle but repeated over a period of time. It can also be overt and intimidatory and is often aimed at an individual who may not be able to defend him or herself.

Contextual matters

Intention: Some individuals may see their hurtful conduct as “teasing” or “a game” or “for the good of” the other person. The School will respond in manner which reflects the impact of the scenario on victim and that is proportionate to the situation in-hand.

Legal aspects: Whilst Bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, but some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986 (e.g. under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, any person who sends an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender, is guilty of an offence if their purpose in sending it was to cause distress or anxiety to the recipient).

Offsite bullying: When it comes to Bullying away from the School premises, *Sections 90 and 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006* say that a school’s disciplinary powers can be used to address pupils’ conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff, but only if it would be reasonable for the school to regulate pupils’ behaviour in those circumstances.

Organisational strategies to support an anti-bullying culture

The House: The four Houses, each containing boys and girls from Senior 7 to Upper Sixth, help to break down any barriers between year groups and increase the sense of community in School.

The Tutor: On entry into the School pupils are assigned to a House Tutor or VI Tutor who is responsible for each individual pupil’s development and welfare. The Tutor is therefore in the best position to watch for early signs of distress, such as deterioration in work, erratic attendance, isolation or the desire to be with adults. Pupils undertake an induction programme that has been designed to help the pupils meet the new demands of the School, to make friends and settle quickly. The Tutor provides the opportunity for pupils to develop a caring relationship with an adult to whom they can talk in confidence and who will treat their worries discreetly and sensitively.

The School Nurse and School Counsellors: are other adults in the community who may also pick up early signs of distress either through spurious illness or erratic attendance. They are also someone, like the Tutor, that the children can speak to with confidence knowing that their concerns will be dealt with sensitively and discreetly.

Anonymous Reporting: The School advertises the use of the *Whisper platform* on Safeguarding posters directed at pupils which provides opportunity for reporting anonymous testimony in regard to child on child abuse.

Break and Lunchtime Supervision of grounds and buildings: All outside play areas, locker areas and designated “wet break” classrooms used by pupils are regularly patrolled by staff

and/or pupils on duty. Duty staff play an important part in ensuring that children play safely and happily. They respond to instances of inappropriate behaviour at the time and inform the relevant Tutor, Head of House or VI staff of incidents that should be followed-up with pupils.

Non-teaching staff: Since the majority of bullying takes place outside the classroom we rely on non-teaching staff, such as kitchen staff and Maintenance Team, to report any concerns about pupils' behaviour to a member of the teaching staff.

Assemblies: Assemblies are used to reinforce School's Personal and Social aims for pupils, particularly the anti-bullying assemblies which address a wide range of issues including; racism, gendered violence, homophobia and anti-social behaviour. When appropriate, the Deputy Head (pastoral), Head of House or Head of Sixth may use this time to address friendship and social relations in the School in response to incidents that have occurred in or out of School.

Preventative measures

We take the following preventative measures:

- Our Policy and procedures to deal with bullying are included in the induction of new staff and there are regular reminders of protocols in staff briefings throughout the year.
- We use appropriate occasions, such as Assemblies, to explain the Schools' Anti-bullying Policy. Our Tutorial/Foundations Programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the School. The programme reinforces the message about community involvement and taking care of each other.
- Pupils are regularly reminded to report bullying to their Tutor or class teacher. We promote the "call it out" approach to accessing support. Pupils are directed to Whisper which enables anonymous reporting of Bullying and child-on-child abuse. Pupils are also encouraged to share concerns anonymously through Mee Too (a peer reciprocal Support app).
- Other lessons reinforce positive messages by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable and by developing the social skills in our pupils for dealing with such situations.

The curriculum and the co-curriculum

The Tutorial/Foundations Programme focuses attention on bullying in the following ways:

- Prior to S7 pupils joining the Senior School there is a team building day when all pupils are involved in activities planned to encourage confidence and friendships across the year group. At the beginning of the Autumn Term there is an Induction Day when pupils are introduced to the code of conduct, which includes advice on bullying. Pupils are informed that bullying is not tolerated in

the School. Everyone, including pupils, is responsible for ensuring that it does not happen and has the responsibility to tell a teacher if it does. Through discussion the idea of telling tales, behind which bullies can attempt to hide, is negated and replaced by the concept of 'the telling school'.

- The Senior 7-8 form Tutorial/Foundations Programme includes sessions on friendship and bullying and cyber-bullying. Here we can encourage children to take action when they see bullying taking place. They can also be helped and encouraged not to tolerate bullying in their play activities or groups: bullies soon stop if they are socially excluded.
- Senior 9 pupils complete a unit within the Tutorial/Foundations Programme which focuses on cyber-bullying, physically aggressive behaviour and challenges racist and homophobic/transphobic bullying. Sexting is also addressed.
- These issues are re-visited in Senior 10. Senior 10 also participate in Community Service which helps them see the positive contribution they can make to society, particularly those less fortunate than themselves. This inculcates a positive attitude to others.
- Videos and theatre presentations are used to stimulate discussion and participation in subsequent workshops.

Other subjects support our anti-bullying programme; for example:

- Drama also provides opportunities for pupils to experience the positive benefits of working co-operatively with others rather than in confrontational and competitive ways. In role-play pupils can devise ways of dealing with bullies in an affirmative fashion.
- Ethics lessons in Senior 7 and 8 require pupils to think about a wide range of issues and challenges, RE lessons in Senior 9 give a more overt spiritual dimension to this.
- Games staff promote the concepts of fair play and respect for all members within the team during their activities with pupils. Our staff respond to incidents which are in contravention of these principles at the time and report issues which re-occur to the relevant Tutors.
- All teaching staff are required to promote a supportive learning environment within their classroom. Pupil behaviour which impacts adversely on the learning opportunities of other pupils is not tolerated and may result in a Friday Detention being issued, for example.

Educational trips and visits and the co-curricular programme:

- In addition to their academic value, school trips provide considerable opportunity for the development of personal and social skills. Being away from home and parents provides pupils with the opportunity to develop and cement their friendships and to gain greater maturity and independence.

- Through their organisational strategies teachers on trips and visits can help to encourage all the children to become accepted members of their peer group and thus help to avoid the development of confrontational and competitive relationships that lead to bullying.
- The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme provides many opportunities for pupils to learn how to work with others whom they would not necessarily chose to work with and to help those less fortunate than themselves in society.
- The many co-curricular clubs and societies running before, during and after-school encourage social interaction and teamwork between the year groups. Again, these help the development of personal and social skills which reduce the risk of bullying, increase a pupil's resilience and raise self-esteem.

The response of teachers to bullying

Teachers themselves must conform to the School's ethos in which relationships between all individuals and groups in the community are based on mutual respect. Teaching staff should It is their responsibility to take positive, In addition to the common law duty of a teacher to take such care of the children in his/her charge as a careful parent would take of his/her own children, there is a statutory duty imposed on teachers to promote the general progress and well-being of individual pupils or groups or classes assigned to them, to maintain good order and discipline among the pupils and to safeguard their health and safety. This duty includes ensuring as far as possible that pupils are free from bullying and harassment this can be achieved through the following measures:

Teachers should:

- Take affirmative action when bullying is suspected of having occurred.
- Deal with any name-calling, racist, xenophobic, sexual or sexist language or actions at the time- 'Call it out'.
- Take the initiative away from bullies who may seek to use the way groups are organised in lessons as a way of isolating their victims (research shows that victims tend to have difficulty asserting themselves in a group).
- Have a firm and fair discipline structure within and outside the classroom.
- Look for signs of unhappiness, isolation or anxiety amongst their pupils and take appropriate action. It is important to be especially aware during break times and lesson change over.
- Dictate where pupils sit in their class.
- Change the seating arrangements frequently to encourage new friendship patterns and to foster integration.
- Dictate the pairs or groups in which children will work on specific activities so that all the children get the chance to work together and are not excluded or made to feel inferior. This requires teachers to include the social dynamics of the group alongside other considerations when planning group activities

- Give attention to social skills when organising and conducting teaching activities. This can raise the self-esteem and confidence of the victims of bullying and can similarly help bullies to work co-operatively with others through encouraging and rewarding behaviour that conforms to the School's ethos.

The role of the Pastoral Team:

- We have a strong and experienced Pastoral Team who are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority and are alert to possible signs of bullying.
- Our Pastoral Team gives support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both victims and bullies
- Staff are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class and patrol the School site, particularly areas where bullying might occur. They are trained to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour
- Our Medical Centre displays advice on where pupils can seek help, including details of confidential help lines and web sites connecting to external specialists, such as Childline and Samaritans. Pupils can also seek support through Whisper and Mee Too.
- All pupils have access to the School telephone, enabling them to call for support if necessary.
- We operate a peer mentoring and wellbeing ambassador scheme, whereby VI form pupils are encouraged to offer advice and support to younger pupils. When appropriate a Head of House might pair up a specific VI pupil with a younger pupil to help that pupil.
- We provide leadership training to our Head Boy and Head Girl and their team of Prefects and senior pupils which specifically covers the importance of offering support and assistance to younger and to vulnerable pupils.
- We reserve the right to investigate incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips and that occur in the vicinity of the School, involving our pupils.
- We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures in an effort to improve our work here.

The response of pupils to bullying

All pupils must recognise that:

- They have a role to prevent bullying occurring and that they have the support of their teachers in this regard;
- A lack of empathy and unkindness leads to bullying, this includes hurtful messages shared online;
- Anti-social behaviour can be viewed as threatening and aggressive, particularly amongst large group;

- They must not marginalize other groups or individual;
- When bullying occurs there is no such thing as an innocent bystander.

If a pupil witnesses an incident of bullying, they must:

- Call it out (challenge the bully);
- Support the victim;
- Speak to a trusted adult about the matter;
- Not engage in 'gossip'.

Pupils should be particularly mindful of supporting pupils who are:

- Socially isolated;
- Quiet in nature;
- New to the School;
- In the minority amongst their peers owing to their race, gender, sexuality or religious beliefs (protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010);
- In need of support for a disability;
- Emotionally vulnerable.

Every pupil deserves respect and a safe learning environment whatever their racial or religious background. This reflects the value modern British society places on diversity.

It is important to encourage the pupils themselves to counteract bullying. This requires the School's policy to be made clear to pupils during the House Tutorial/Foundations programme and supported by adults in our community. Peer group counselling and discussion are used to encourage pupils to support victims and to reject the behaviour of bullies.

The help of pupils can also be enlisted to support new pupils or pupils who are shy or have a particular reason for being worried or unhappy, such as an illness or bereavement. This not only supports and protects the child in need but encourages caring attitudes in individuals and caring and responsible attitudes in the group towards others.

Sexual harassment

In June 2021, Ofsted's review of Sexual Abuse and Harassment in Schools and Colleges found that 9 out of 10 girls, and half the boys who took part in the review said being sent unsolicited explicit pictures or videos happened 'a lot' to them or their peers. 92% of girls and three-quarters of boys complained of recurrent sexist name-calling. The reports states: *"The frequency of these harmful sexual behaviours means that some children and young people consider them normal."* The school aims to confront the issue head-on.

Sexualised bullying is a behaviour, physical or non-physical, where sexuality or gender is used as a weapon against another. It is any behaviour which degrades someone, singles

someone out using sexual language, gestures or violence, and victimising someone for their appearance.

Sexual bullying is also pressured to act promiscuously and to act in a way that makes others uncomfortable. Sexual harassment is unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature which: violates dignity, makes a person feel intimidated, degraded, or humiliated and creates a hostile or offensive environment. These behaviours can happen inside and outside school, in social groups and online.

Forms of sexualised bullying

Sexual bullying includes a wide range of behaviour and can often cause distress and devastation to a person. Some examples of sexualised bullying include:

- Abusive, sexualised name calling and insults; this includes using homophobic and transphobic language and insults towards others;
- Spreading rumours of a sexual nature online or in person;
- Unwelcome looks and comments about someone's appearance or looks, either face to face or behind their backs;
- Inappropriate and uninvited touching without consent;
- Pressurising someone to do something they do not want to do, using emotional blackmail such as 'you would do this if you loved me' or comparing previous encounters to make someone feel obliged to do something sexual;
- Upskirting - where someone takes a picture under a person's clothing without their permission. It is now a specific criminal offence;
- Pressurising someone to send nude or semi-nude images and using emotional blackmail
- Sending a nude or semi-nude image to others without consent;
- Inappropriate sexual innuendos that are persistent and unwelcome;
- Sexism in all its forms and gender stereotyping roles;
- Graffiti with sexual content or display/circulation of inappropriate material of a sexual nature, such as pornography;
- In its most extreme form, sexual assault, or rape.

All staff must be aware that the behaviours outlined above should never be tolerated or dismissed as "banter", "part of growing up", "just having a laugh", or "boys being boys". Behaviours which are potentially criminal in nature, such as grabbing bottoms, breasts or genitalia must be challenged or they risk being normalised. Staff should feel able to respond effectively to incidents through implementation of Safeguarding procedures and instill confidence in pupils and parents that issues will be dealt with

Sexism and gender stereotyping

Sexism is a behaviour, language or prejudice, which expresses institutionalised, systematic and comprehensive discrimination. It is based on a stereotypical view of masculine and feminine roles. Sexism limits the options of women and girls and can lead to discrimination or

less favourable treatment. It is learned behaviour, however, and can therefore be 'unlearned' and the School must play its part in tackling findings of the recent Ofsted Report.

The impact of sexualised bullying and harassment

There is evidence that sexual bullying is increasing, and it is linked to domestic violence and other gender-based violence such as rape and sexual assault.

Sexual bullying can undermine a person's dignity and safety as well as affect their emotional wellbeing and lead to depression, isolation, eating disorders and self-harming.

In tackling Sexual Harassment staff should be aware that Pupils with Special Educational Needs or disabilities may not be able to articulate experiences as well as other pupils. However, they may be at greater risk of being bullied precisely because of their specific difficulties.

Appendix 2 of this policy outlines the procedure for responding to reports of sexual violence and harassment between children.

Cyber-bullying

All elements of this policy cover many different aspects of bullying, including cyber-bullying. The line between the 'real' and 'virtual' worlds is now almost non-existent for children and teenagers. At the foundation of the School's work on cyber-bullying, is the phrase: "Think before you post"

Cyber-bullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. Cyber-bullying can occur through SMS, Text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behaviour.

The most common places where cyberbullying occurs are:

- Social Media, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Tik Tok;
- Text messaging and messaging apps on mobile or tablet devices;
- Instant messaging, direct messaging, and online chatting over the internet;
- Online forums, chat rooms, and message boards, such as Reddit;
- Email;
- Online gaming communities.

Types of cyber-bullying

There are many ways by which pupils can fall victim to or experience cyberbullying when using technology and the internet. Some common methods of cyber-bullying are:

Harassment – When someone is being harassed online, they are being subjected to a string of abusive messages or efforts to contact them by one person or a group of people.

Doxing – Doxing is when an individual or group of people distribute another person's personal information such as their home address, phone number or school onto social media or public forums without that person's permission to do so.

Cyber-stalking – Similar to harassment, cyber-stalking involves the perpetrator making persistent efforts to gain contact with the victim, however this differs from harassment – more commonly than not, people will cyber-stalk another person due to deep feelings towards that person, whether they are positive or negative.

Revenge porn – is when sexually explicit or compromising images of a person have been distributed onto social media or shared on specific websites without their permission to do so.

False profiles – Fake social media accounts can be set up with the intention of damaging a person's reputation.

Slut shaming – Slut shaming is when someone is called out and labelled as a "slut" for something that they have done previously or even how they choose to dress.

With specific reference to the risk posed by cyber-bullying, the School:

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its charter for the safe use of the internet. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our IT Department and Safeguarding Team monitors pupils' use through the use of Senso.
- May impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet.
- Issues all pupils with their own personal school email address. Access to sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter, Tik Tok is not allowed.
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyber-bullying in the Tutorial/Foundations Programme.
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe.
- Does not permit the use of cameras, mobile telephones, or other digital recording devices by pupils on site.
- Recognises the powers given to Head Teachers outlined in *Screening, searching and confiscation*, published by DfE in January 2023 to look at content on mobile phones.

- Hosts a regular *Digital Parenting* which presents to parents the content of the ICT teaching curriculum in Senior 7 and the Tutorial/Foundations Programme in Senior 7 to Senior 10. The event is supported by members of the pupil led Digital Resilience Committee.
- Provides information to parents through emails
- Solicits pupil voice through The School Cabinet and Digital Resilience Committee.

The role of parents

Parents play an important role in supporting the School's *Anti-bullying Policy*.

- Parents may be the first to notice early signs of distress and alert the School, thus enabling action to be taken by the Pastoral Team.
- By discussing the issues with both the child and House staff, parents can help and support their child to deal with the situation.
- Parents can also help their child forming and handling friendships and adopt a whole-hearted approach to the co-curricular life of the School.
- Parents can seek support through the Teen Tips Wellbeing Hub and attend forums and Teenage Wellbeing talks offered by the School.

Signs of bullying

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- 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);
- Diminished levels of self-confidence;
- Frequent visits to the Medical Centre with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches
- Unexplained cuts and bruises;
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class.
- Choosing the company of adults;
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact;
- Difficulty in sleeping, experiences nightmares;
- Talking of suicide or running away.

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying, will be investigated by parents and teachers.

Procedures for dealing with reported bullying

The following guidelines set out the strategies undertaken by the School for dealing with bullying if it occurs:

- If, on investigation by the a member of staff, signs of distress indicate that a child is being bullied, it is important to offer immediate support and help for the victim. Tutors or class teachers should report their concerns to the relevant member of the Pastoral Team, or in the case of a Safeguarding concern, to the DSL/DDSL- following which an assessment will be made.

Assessment: A member of the Pastoral Team will normally interview the victim and any witnesses without delay and form an initial view of the allegation, *viz*:

- The nature of the incident/s - physical? verbal? sexual? exclusionary? etc.
- Is it a “one-off” incident involving an individual or a group?
- Is it part of a pattern of behaviour by an individual or a group?
- Has physical injury been caused? Who should be informed – Deputy Head (pastoral)/DSL or Head of Sixth? These senior staff may contact parents, Social Services, or the police.
- Can the alleged bully be seen on a no-names basis?

The bully is then interviewed separately, he or she may be asked to record the events in writing. The Tutor or Head of House will record this and all subsequent discussions with pupils. All written records are placed on My Concern. In some cases, staff investigating the matter will take notes rather than request a written statement from the pupil.

Where the bully admits to behaving in contravention to the Code of Conduct a meeting should be held with all pupils involved. At the meeting an opportunity should be provided for the bully/bullies to make a verbal apology to the victim and an undertaking not to behave in this way again. The apology and undertaking should then be made in writing and put on file.

In the first instance of bullying, provided the behaviour has not posed a serious threat to the safety of other pupils, a firm warning should be given at the meeting that any further incidents would result in parents being informed and asked to come in to school. The victim should be asked to inform the Head of House or VI staff if there are any further incidents of bullying, in which case a further investigation should take place immediately.

Should a pupil accused of bullying deny the accusation, the evidence will be examined and a meeting between both parties arranged to establish the facts. Should the accusation be upheld, a decision will be made to treat the behaviour as a low-level incident but compounded by the pupil lying about the matter, or a serious incident (also compounded by lying) and treated accordingly.

Where the facts are unclear the pupils will be warned about the consequences of bullying. The Tutor and class teachers will be asked to monitor pupils for signs of bullying.

The parents of the bullied pupil may be contacted and informed of the problem and action taken by the School.

Peer group counselling/restorative process will be considered, where appropriate, to enlist the help of the pupils in dealing with the problem, both by the rejection of bullying behaviour and through supporting and befriending isolated children.

Once these procedures have been followed it is important for the Tutor and class teachers to continue supporting the children involved over a period of time until new patterns of behaviour and friendships are established. In particular, regular meetings should be arranged for a period to ensure the child is happy and advice should be given where appropriate to encourage victims to be assertive and to consider their role in relationships which may have led to friendship problems.

Serious Incident: If the member of the Pastoral Team believes that particularly serious bullying behaviour has occurred or such behaviour has recurred after warnings have been given to the bully they inform the Deputy Head (pastoral). The matter will be investigated as outlined in the School's Behaviour Policy (Appendix 4- Serious Breach of Discipline).

Sanctions issued to bullies

1. In line with the Schools' *Managing Pupil Behaviour Policy*, the first instance of bullying behaviour may, dependent on the severity of the offence, lead to the issue of a Behaviour or Head's Detention, or depending upon the nature of the incident, a more serious sanction.
2. Repeated bullying by a pupil leads to an escalation of response, with the Head determining whether the child will be suspended (internally or externally) or, ultimately, withdrawn from the School.

Queries

Queries on this policy should be directed to the Deputy Head (Pastoral).

Review and Verification

This policy is reviewed annually, or more frequently if deemed to be in need of updating in the interim, by the Deputy Head (Pastoral).

Appendices

Please see overleaf for Appendices 1 and 2.

Appendix 1

Statutory Framework: What does the law say and what does the School have to do?

Every school must have measures in place to prevent all forms of bullying.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 provides that maintained schools must have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. These measures should be part of the School's behaviour policy, which must be communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents.

Independent School Standard Regulations 2010

The Independent School Standards Regulations 2010 provide that the proprietor of an Academy or other independent school is required to ensure that an effective anti-bullying strategy is drawn up and implemented.

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 replaces previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. A key provision is a new public sector Equality Duty, which came into force on 5 April 2011. It replaces the three previous public sector equality duties for race, disability and gender, and covers age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Duty has three aims. It requires public bodies to have 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.

Maintained schools and Academies are required to comply with the new Equality Duty. Part 6 of the Act makes it unlawful for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil in relation to admissions, the way it provides education for pupils, provision of pupil access to any benefit, facility or service, or by excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment. In England and Wales Part 6 of the Act applies to maintained schools and Academies and to other independent schools.

Safeguarding children and young people

Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should 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 their 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.

Criminal law

Although bullying is not in itself a criminal offence, some types of harassing or threatening behaviour or communications may be criminal offences, under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public order Act 1986.

Cyber-bullying

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. Separate advice on teachers' powers to search (including statutory guidance on dealing with electronic devices) is available – see below for a link to this document.¹² For more information on how to respond to cyber-bullying and how pupils can keep themselves safe, please refer to the Childnet link under 'further resources'.

Appendix 2

Procedure for responding to reports of sexual violence and harassment between children

The School recognises that reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are extremely complex to manage, and that victims need to be protected, offered appropriate support and allowed to continue with their education with minimum disruption. The School is mindful that reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment require a distinct approach, and follows the guidance set out by the DfE in the updated document, “Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges” (DfE 2021).

Reporting

Following a report of sexual abuse or harassment it is important that staff take appropriate action in accordance with the School’s Child Protection Policy (Chapter 15). When an allegation about sexual violence or harassment is made the matter must be immediately passed on to the DSL or appropriate DDSL. This is the case whether the report comes directly from the victim or indirectly from a witness or other concerned person. A written report should be created detailing the facts of the allegation and added to My Concern as soon as possible.

When responding to allegations members of staff should adopt a zero-tolerance approach. The allegation must be taken seriously, and the pupil reassured. Staff should follow the guidelines set out in the School’s Child Protection Policy on how to handle allegations of abuse (Chapter 14). It is of paramount importance that *“a victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment, [or] ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report or their experience minimised”* (DfE 2021).

There may be reports where the alleged sexual harassment or sexual violence has taken place outside of school or online, and/or where the children concerned attend two or more different schools or colleges. In such cases the safeguarding principles remain same, and information sharing, and effective multi-agency work become especially important.

Assessment

Immediate Assessment

After receiving a report of sexual abuse or harassment the DSL or DDSL should follow the guidelines outlined in the School’s Child Protection Policy (Chapter 16).

The DSL or DDSL should consider the following immediately:

- The immediate safety of the victim, perpetrator(s), and other children or staff;
- Whether a crime has been committed that should be reported to the police, i.e., rape, assault by penetration, or sexual assault;
- Whether a referral to Children’s Services is appropriate, i.e., a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger.

Contextual Assessment

Before considering any action, the DSL or DDSL should consider the following contextual factors:

- The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed;
- The nature of the alleged incident(s), including whether a crime may have been committed and/or evidence of Harmful Sexual Behaviour;
- Any links to child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation;
- The ages of the children involved and their developmental stages;
- Any power imbalance between the children, i.e., age, maturity, confidence, disability or learning difficulty;
- If the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse;
- The fact that sexual violence and sexual harassment can take place within intimate personal relationships between peers.

Action

The victim should be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how the investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered. However, this will be balanced with the School's duty and responsibilities to protect other children.

The victim may ask the school not to tell anyone (including the perpetrator(s)) about the sexual violence or sexual harassment. In accordance with guidelines from DfE (2021) if the victim does not give consent to share information, the DSL or DDSL may still choose to share it, to either protect the child from further harm or to promote the welfare of children. If the DSL or DDSL decide to share the information against the victim's wishes, the reasons should be explained to the victim and appropriate specialist support offered.

Risk and Needs Assessment

When there has been a report of sexual violence, the DSL or DDSL should complete a Risk and Needs Assessment, which should be written and recorded on My Concern. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a Risk Assessment should be considered on a case-by-case basis. The Risk and Needs assessment should consider:

- The victim(s), especially their protection and support;
- The alleged perpetrator(s);
- All the other pupils and staff at the School.

The DSL or DDSL consider the risks posed to all the parties above and put in place adequate measures to protect them and keep them safe. Such measures should include the removal of the alleged perpetrator(s) from the class of the victim, and measures to keep the victim and the alleged perpetrator(s) apart on School premises and transport, whilst the School establishes the facts and/or begins the process of liaising with Children Services and the

Police. Where there has been a report of sexual violence, it is likely that professional risk assessments by social workers and or sexual violence specialists will be required. Any such professional assessments should be used to inform the School's approach to supporting and protecting their pupils and updating their own risk assessment.

Establishing the facts

In some cases, it may be necessary for the Pastoral Leadership Team to establish the facts in greater detail. If so, an interviews with the victim/witness will be arranged as soon as possible and a written reports added to My Concern. When conducting the interview, the member of staff should follow the guidance set out in the School's Child Protection Policy (Chapter 15). Careful consideration must be given to what support will be made available both during and following the interview. In cases where a suspected crime has been committed, the Police should be notified first.

In most cases, the Pastoral Leadership Team, will seek to interview the alleged perpetrator(s) and/or any witnesses as soon as possible, however in cases where a suspected crime has been committed, the Police must be notified first. The alleged perpetrator(s) will be asked to respond to the allegations in a written statement and subsequently questioned. The written statement, and a written record of any oral testimony, will be added to My Concern. In cases where there is more than one alleged perpetrator, the perpetrators will be interviewed separately, and if possible, remain separated until the facts are established. The School is aware that in some cases the perpetrator(s) have themselves been victims of sexual abuse, or engaged in HSB, and as such may require support in parallel to the investigation and any subsequent disciplinary action. Such support must be made available both during and following the interview.

Dispute over the facts

If following investigation there is a dispute over the facts, appropriate steps should still be taken to support and safeguard the victim. In cases which are managed internally (see below) the contextual assessment should determine how to respond to the alleged perpetrator(s). For example, one-off reports of sexual harassment may be followed up with appropriate preventative steps, i.e., education and awareness, but no sanction. However, reports of sexual harassment which fit a pattern of abuse, or where there is concern over the safeguarding of the victim(s) or perpetrator(s), may be escalated to Early Help or Children's Social Care.

Managing the report

There are four likely pathways for managing a report of sexual violence or harassment, they are:

- Manage internally
- Early Help
- Referral to Children's Social Care
- Reporting to the Police

Manage internally

In some cases of sexual harassment, for example a one-off incident, the School may elect to handle the incident internally without the need for Early Help or statutory services. In such cases the following steps would be taken:

- The victim will be offered immediate support proportionate to the offence. For cases managed internally this might include reassurance from the Pastoral Team and/or therapeutic intervention from the School Counsellor.
- Parents/carers of the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) contacted about the facts of the allegation on a no-names basis. Correspondence is recorded on My Concern.
- A meeting with the perpetrator(s) and their parents/carers is organised where the seriousness of the offence is explained to the perpetrator(s) in line with the School's zero-tolerance approach. The minutes of the meeting are recorded on My Concern.
- A sanction is awarded commensurate to the offence, i.e., a Saturday Detention/Suspension
- Mediation between victim and perpetrator(s) is organised as part of the restorative process (if the victim wishes). The outcome of which will be communicated to both sets of parents/carers and recorded on My Concern.
- A risk assessment is likely to be produced, examples of mitigation include: the perpetrator(s) being removed from the class of the victim for at least the rest of the Academic Year or longer (if the victim wishes).
- The perpetrator(s) might be signposted towards educational material on Sexual Harassment.
- The Pastoral Leadership Team will "check-in" with the victim at regular intervals, and no less than three times within a month of the report. A written record of the "check-in" will be recorded on My Concern.
- If future allegations are made against the perpetrator(s), a new assessment must be undertaken with the historic allegations born in mind.

Early Help

In some cases of sexual harassment, for example where either the victim or perpetrator(s) are more vulnerable, the DSL or DDSL may elect to initiate an Early Help Assessment (Working Together To Safeguard Children, 2023) in addition to the steps outlined above. The Pastoral Leadership Team would then continue to offer support to both the victim and perpetrator(s) as part of The Team Around the Child. This includes access to the School Counsellors.

Referral to Children's Social Care

In cases where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger, the DSL or DDSL would make a referral to Children's Social Care following the guidance set out in

the School's Child Protection Policy. The DSL and DDSL will work closely with Children's Social Care (and other agencies as required) to ensure any actions the School do not jeopardise a statutory investigation, and that appropriate support is made available to the victim and/or perpetrator(s). Following the outcome of the Children's Social Care assessment the DSL and/or DDSL should update its own Risk and Needs Assessment however necessary.

If Children's Social Care decide a statutory intervention is not appropriate. The School should be prepared to refer again if they believe the child remains in immediate danger or at risk of harm. If a statutory assessment is not appropriate, the DSL and DDSL should consider other support mechanisms such as early help, specialist support and pastoral support.

Reporting to the Police

Any report to the police will generally be in parallel with a referral to Children's Social Care. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting point is this should be passed on to the police.

At this stage the School will also generally inform parents/carers unless there are compelling reasons not to, for example, if informing a parent or carer is likely to put a child at additional risk. In circumstances where parents or carers have not been informed, it will be especially important that the School supports the child in any decision they take. This should be with the support of Children's Social Care and any appropriate specialist agencies.

Where a report has been made to the police, the School should consult the police and agree what information can be disclosed to staff and others, in particular, the alleged perpetrator(s) and their parents or carers. They should also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity.

Whatever arrangements are subsequently put in place by the Police, and whatever the outcome of any following criminal process, the School will consider what additional measures may be necessary to manage any assessed risk of harm that may arise within School. The DSL or DDSL will update the Risk and Needs Assessment as necessary and record on My Concern. Careful consideration should be given to the safeguarding and support of the victim, perpetrator(s), and other members of the school community.

Ongoing Support

The School is mindful that the needs and wishes of the victim are paramount (along with protecting the child) in any response. The School recognises that the victim must feel in control of any subsequent process, and should therefore be consulted in any decision making, and given options in terms of appropriate support. Support will be tailored on a case by case basis and proportionate to both the scale of the reported abuse and vulnerability of the victim. In School support may include a regular "check in" by the Pastoral Leadership Team or Designated Adult, whilst outside of School support may involve a range of specialist services as documented in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025). Wherever possible, the victim should be able to continue in their normal routine (if they wish) with the feeling that School is a safe space for them.

Appraisal

The School is mindful that reports of sexual violence and/or harassment (especially where there is evidence of patterns of behaviour) may point to cultural and or systemic problems that could be addressed by updating relevant policies, processes, or relevant parts of the curriculum. As such special consideration will be given to a) the effectiveness of preventative steps i.e., the Foundations curriculum, and b) the handling and management of any reported abuse. Appropriate adjustments will then be made in line with the School's zero-tolerance approach.