

# Anti-Bullying Policy

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## 1. Aims and Objectives

Mill Hill Education Group (the 'Group') is the trading name of The Mill Hill School Foundation. It is a group of independent mainstream Schools which together educate girls and boys aged 6 months to 18 years.

Abbot's Hill is part of the Group. The term School refers to each Group School, as appropriate. This policy solely relates to Abbot's Hill School

Mill Hill Education Group is 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 to their full potential. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed, but orderly, atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other, inside and outside of School.

The Schools within the Group pride themselves on their respect and inclusivity . Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting the School in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that there are consistent expectations of behaviour both at School and at home, and that the School and parents co-operate closely together.

This policy is available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils on our website and for reading in the School office during the School day. It is also communicated to all staff and pupils.

Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination of pupils or staff will not be tolerated by the School. We treat all of our pupils and their parents fairly, and with consideration, and we expect them to respect the staff, the School, Group and each other, in return. All forms of bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying) are unacceptable at the School and any instances of bullying will be recorded and, where appropriate, will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the relevant School's Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy.

This policy applies to all pupils in the School, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and applies to actions undertaken both inside, and outside of the School.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- [MHEG-Safeguarding-and-Protecting-the-Welfare-of-Pupils-2024.pdf](#)
- [Promoting-Positive-Behaviour-Policy-2.pdf](#)
- [Online-Safety-Policy-2024.pdf](#)
- Staff Code of Conduct (internal document)(internal document)
- [Keeping children safe in education 2024](#)
- [Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK](#)
- [Preventing and tackling bullying](#)
- [Cyberbullying-guidance2.pdf](#)

## 2. 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. However, not every incident of unkind behaviour between children will be bullying, and the School will take an objective approach in considering the details of each incident to decide whether it is, or is not, bullying.

Put another way, bullying is the intentional hurting, harming, or humiliating of another person. It may take many forms, including physical (including any threat of or use of violence of any kind), sexual (including the sharing of nudes/semi-nudes), verbal (including cyber-bullying via email, social media, gaming, and SMS or other instant messages), and emotional (including by excluding, being sarcastic, name-calling, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone, or actions that fall short of direct participation, where someone encourages others to bully, or joins in with laughing at a victim. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidating, and often involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim whether that be a physical, psychological or intellectual imbalance, or by the perpetrator having the capacity to socially isolate the victim.

Bullying is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, and may involve actions or comments regarding a person's race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special education needs or disabilities (SEND), or because of a child's familial circumstances, such as they are adopted, in care or that they have caring responsibilities. Bullying may be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. For example, bullying can still be homophobic if directed towards a child that is perceived to be gay, whether or not this is the case.

Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time and can involve anyone - pupils, other young people, staff and parents.

## 3. The Group's Response to Bullying

At the Group Schools, we always treat bullying very seriously. It conflicts sharply with our social and moral principles, and with our policy on equal opportunities, and will not be tolerated. When incidents of bullying occur, they are dealt with quickly and taken seriously. The Group will never dismiss bullying as banter or horseplay, and all reported incidents of bullying will be challenged, and dealt with by staff in accordance with this policy. It is abuse and downplaying such behaviours can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, and unsafe environment for children, and a culture that might normalise such abuse leading to it being accepted as normal and left unreported.

The Group understands that bullying can be so serious that it may cause physical, emotional and psychological damage, such as eating disorders, self-harm and even suicide. Stopping violence and ensuring the immediate physical safety of pupils is the first priority, however, the Group acknowledges that emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical bullying, and therefore staff will use their discretion when dealing with an incident of bullying within the parameters of this policy and the relevant School's Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy.

Whilst bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment, sexual violence and assault, sexting, the sharing of nudes/semi-nudes (in certain circumstances), upskirting and to violent and threatening behaviour. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying: everybody has the right to be treated with respect.

The School recognises that children with SEND or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges and may be more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than

other children. The School also recognises that certain children may face additional barriers to reporting an incident because of their vulnerability, disability, sex, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation.

Pupils who are victims of bullying will always be supported and will be reassured that they will be kept safe. Pupils who have engaged in bullying behaviour will be subject to appropriate disciplinary sanction and will also, where possible, be supported in learning different ways of behaving and offered support for their own circumstances, where appropriate.

Bullying which occurs on School trips or outside of the School's premises will not be tolerated any more than bullying on School premises. Teachers will, where appropriate, discipline pupils for misbehaviour outside School premises and outside School hours.

#### **4. 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 poor work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others;
- Books, bags, money 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 which may relate to stress or anxiety, such as stomach pains or headaches;
- Unexplained cuts and bruises;
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance or late arrival to class;
- Choosing the company of adults rather than peers;
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact;
- Difficulty in sleeping or experiencing nightmares; or
- Talking of suicide or running away from home or School.

Although there may be other causes of some of the above symptoms, a repetition or combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers and reported/ recorded, as appropriate, in accordance with this policy.

#### **5. Bullying - Preventative Measures**

The Group response to bullying does not start at the point in which a pupil has been bullied. The Group actively seeks to raise awareness of and prevent bullying becoming a problem in the first place. We do this by:

- Promoting an ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat each other with respect at all times, inside and outside of School;
- Creating a culture in which our pupils feel able to share their concerns openly, in a non-judgemental environment;
- Establishing conditions in which our pupils can aspire to and realise safe and healthy relationships;
- Encouraging a culture of inclusivity and respect amongst all members of the Group community.

## **Pupils**

- All new pupils (including EYFS pupils) are briefed thoroughly on the School's expected standards of behaviour. They are told what to do if they encounter bullying. The School guarantees that those who report bullying in good faith will not be punished and will be supported;
- We use appropriate assemblies and tutorials to explain the Group's policy on bullying;
- The Group PSHE programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the Group. The programme is structured to enforce messages about community involvement and taking care of each other. It focuses on the importance of equality and diversity, and pupils are encouraged to avoid prejudicial and exclusionary language;
- Other lessons highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by developing social skills and by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable;
- All of our pupils are encouraged to tell any member of staff at once if they are being bullied, or if they know or suspect that bullying is taking place;
- All pupils (including EYFS pupils) know how to report anxieties to an appropriate member of staff;
- The School buildings display advice on where pupils can seek help, including details of confidential help lines and websites where they can connect with external specialists, such as ChildLine, Kidscape, Bullying UK, and the Samaritans and details of the Group Independent Listener;
- We provide age-appropriate training to pupils with positions of responsibility (such as prefects and monitors) which specifically covers the importance of offering support and assistance to others particularly to younger and to vulnerable pupils;
- The School does not tolerate peer-group "initiation ceremonies" or hazing rituals designed to cause pain, anxiety or humiliation to pupils, and all staff remain alert to such actions.

## **Staff**

- Upon induction, all new members of staff are given training and guidance on the School's Anti-bullying policy and on how to react to, and record allegations of bullying at the School. The School ensures that all staff understand the principles of the School's policy, the School's legal responsibilities, actions to be taken to resolve and prevent incidents of bullying from arising or escalating and also details of sources of further support;
- The School recognises that certain children may be more at risk of bullying than others, and may require additional support when dealing with an incident of bullying, for example, SEND and LGBT pupils. The School will ensure that staff receive appropriate training to be able to understand the specific needs of our pupils, and to enable all staff to provide an inclusive environment for all pupils;
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. Records of any incidents are kept securely on CPOMS in order that patterns of behaviour can be identified and monitored;
- Each Group School has an experienced Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs) who are trained in how to handle incidents as an immediate priority, and who are alert to possible signs of bullying and will know when to apply our safeguarding procedures to bullying incidents. The DSLs and DDSLs are ably assisted by the wider team of pastoral staff such as Class teachers in Prep, Tutors, Heads of Year and Key people for Nursery;
- The School will give support and guidance to pupils of all faiths (and none) who are able to refer themselves to him whenever they wish (for example, at a time of family break-up, sickness or bereavement). The Chaplain will provide confidential advice and seek to encourage the development of inclusivity, understanding and respect for others in a multi-faith community;
- Staff are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class and there are appropriate levels of supervision in place across the School sites in accordance with the relevant School's supervision policy.

Staff are trained to be alert to particular areas where bullying might occur. They are also trained to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour at all times;

- The School has the right to investigate incidents of bullying involving our pupils which take place outside School hours, on School visits and trips, or that otherwise occur outside of School. The School has the right to take disciplinary measures in respect of such incidents. Disciplinary measures will be taken in accordance with the relevant School's Positive Behaviour Policy and will be applied in a fair, consistent, and reasonable manner, taking into account the needs of SEND and vulnerable pupils.

## Parents

- This policy is available on the School's website so that parents are clear on the School's approach to bullying and what to do if their child experiences bullying;
- We encourage close contact between the School and parents/guardians, and will always make contact if we are worried about a pupil's well-being;
- If parents know or suspect that their child, or another pupil, is being bullied, they should contact the School without delay. All concerns will be taken seriously;
- We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures and all other aspects and implementation of this policy.

## 6. Procedures for Dealing with Reported Bullying

The School ensures that all instances of, or concerns about bullying and cyber-bullying, both on and away from School premises are easy to report and that they are recorded properly. Records of instances of bullying and allegations of bullying will be kept on CPOMS, in order to enable the School to identify patterns of behaviour and to evaluate the effectiveness of this policy.

The School recognises that pupils are likely to report bullying to someone they trust: this could be any member of staff. All staff will be trained in handling an allegation and will be aware that they must listen to the pupil, not ask leading questions and make a written record of the allegation to the best of their ability.

### Investigations

All reports will be investigated, however minor, to ensure that a potentially serious case does not develop. If an incident of bullying is reported, the following procedure will be adopted:

1. The member of staff to whom the incident was reported, or who first discovers the situation, will control the situation and will reassure and support the pupil(s) involved, without promising absolute confidentiality. The member of staff will inform an appropriate member of the School's pastoral team about the bullying allegation as soon as possible.
2. A member of the pastoral team (most likely the Nursery manager, Head of Pre-Prep, Head of Year/Section or one of the Assistant Head (pastoral)) will talk to the pupil(s) concerned, giving them time to explain the situation, reassuring them that their allegation will be taken seriously and investigated. There may be a clash between the wishes of the pupil and the needs of the Group with regard to confidentiality. However, from the outset, staff will make it clear that others may need to be consulted. *[Step 2 might be omitted depending on the amount of detail ascertained during Step 1]*
3. An appropriate member of Abbot's Hill Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will then co-ordinate an investigation and will liaise with other relevant members of the SLT and pastoral team to ensure the investigation is conducted in line with Group protocols and procedures.

4. The victim and the alleged perpetrator/s will each be interviewed individually with a suitable adult present for support. The written account of the interview will be read back to the pupil(s) (where this is appropriate for their age) and they will be asked to verify its accuracy. The pupil(s) may also be asked to write their account of events if appropriate.
5. The written account(s) of the incident should be signed and dated. The SLT member, who is jointly responsible for keeping records of bullying and other serious disciplinary offences, will ensure that these are securely stored on CPOMS.
6. A member of the Executive Leadership Team will then decide on what action is required following the completion of the investigation. They will ensure that the outcome of the investigation is communicated to relevant parties such as the pupil(s)' Key person, Class teacher, Tutor, and parents/guardians. In serious incidents, the Head should be informed.

## **Outcome of the Investigation**

In instances where the allegation of bullying is confirmed, both the victims of bullying and those who have been involved in bullying behaviour can expect the support of the Group.

1. The victim will be offered support to develop a strategy to help themselves. It will be made clear to them why revenge or retaliation is inappropriate. The support offered will seek to help the victim recover from the unpleasant and upsetting effects of bullying and to begin once more to enjoy their experience at the School.
2. The motivation behind the bullying behaviour will be considered. If these considerations lead to concerns that the perpetrator(s) may be at risk of harm, the Group Safeguarding Policy and associated procedures will be followed.
3. It will be made clear to the perpetrator(s) why their behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. He/she will be offered support and guidance to help improve their behaviour.
4. For both the victims of bullying and those who have been involved in bullying behaviour, it may be appropriate for the School Chaplain to become involved. Support from external services will also be sought if appropriate, in particular where it would assist in tackling any underlying issues of the pupil who has been involved in bullying behaviour.
5. As part of the process, a meeting involving victim(s) and perpetrator(s), with close staff supervision, may be convened to help develop a strategy which enables all concerned to close the episode of bullying.
6. The parents/ guardians of all parties will be informed and may be invited into School to discuss the matter. The parents' support will be sought in respect of preventative measures, and any concerns of either party will be addressed.
7. A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place and put on record.

## **Sanctions**

Whilst the Group recognises the need to support those who have been involved in bullying behaviour in changing their behaviour, it also accepts that sanctions may often be necessary and appropriate as part of its response to bullying incidents.

Each case will be dealt with on an individual basis and the punishment imposed will be dependent on the seriousness of the incident. The range of sanctions available to the Group is set out in the Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy relevant to the School, and in some cases the Group Expulsion, Removal and Review Policy. Pupils who are found to have been involved in bullying others can expect, as a minimum, a School detention although a more severe sanction may well be considered appropriate. In serious cases, bullying may lead to permanent exclusion from the Group.

Disciplinary sanctions will be fairly, consistently and reasonably applied, taking into account any special educational needs or disabilities of the pupil and the needs of vulnerable pupils.

## **Further Considerations**

All allegations of child-on-child abuse will be treated as a safeguarding concern. Concerns will be investigated and managed in accordance with the Group Safeguarding Policy.

Where an issue of pupil behaviour or bullying gives "reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm", staff should follow the procedures set out in the Group Safeguarding Policy.

The School reserves the right to act in what it considers to be the best interests of the pupil and/or the School community as a whole when dealing with incidents of bullying or suspected bullying, even if this conflicts with the wishes of the parent of the alleged victim of the bullying.

Where the staff member investigating considers that the reported bullying behaviour may be criminal, or considers that there may be a risk of harm to someone, the staff member will discuss this with the DSL (and Head). The DSL will report the matter to the Police without delay if considered necessary. The School will then follow the procedures set out in the Group Safeguarding Policy as well as any guidance from the Police.

In serious cases, the DSL (and Head) will be involved, and it may then be necessary to make a report to the Police, and/or to Children's Services. In many cases it will be possible to resolve such issues internally under this policy and the School's Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy.

In cases where criminal /potential criminal activity is immediately apparent or suspected, the police will be called immediately.

## **7. Cyber-Bullying**

Cyber-bullying can be defined as "*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*" (Belsey, <http://www.cyber-bullying.org/>). It is an intentional act often carried out repeatedly over time, and often against a victim who cannot easily defend themselves. The School acknowledges that cyber-bullying may take place inside School, outside of School and at any time of the day.

Cyber-bullying could involve communications by various electronic media, including for example:

- Texts, instant messages or calls on mobile phones;
- The use of mobile phone camera images to cause distress, fear or humiliation;
- Posting threatening, abusive, sexual, discriminatory, offensive or humiliating material or comments on websites (including blogs, personal websites and social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, TikTok or YouTube and any other platforms);
- Using e-mail to message others in a threatening or abusive manner; or



- Hijacking/ cloning e-mail accounts.

The Group acknowledges that cyber-bullying may take many different forms including: cyber-stalking, exclusion or peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorised publication of private information or images, encouraging derogatory comments on online platforms, sharing nudes/semi-nudes, upskirting and sexting.

The Group has a role to play in teaching pupils about the underpinning knowledge and behaviours that can help them to navigate the online world safely and confidently regardless of the device, platform or app. In taking this forward, the School has regard to the DfE's non-statutory guidance on *Teaching Online Safety in Schools* (Jan 2023).

## **Prevention of Cyber-Bullying**

For the prevention of cyber-bullying, in addition to the measures described above, the School:

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its policy for the safe use of the internet and technology. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our IT Department monitors pupils' use on School devices and School platforms and applications;
- May impose disciplinary sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse, of the internet or technology in accordance with the relevant School's Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy;
- Issues all pupils with their own personal School email address;
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyber-bullying in PSHE lessons, which covers blocking, removing contacts from "friend" lists and sharing their personal data;
- Ensures its pupils are aware of the various forms in which cyber-bullying can take place, that it can have severe and distressing consequences, and that participation in cyber-bullying will not be tolerated;
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details private and secure;
- Does not allow the use of mobile phones in classrooms, public areas of the School, or where they may cause annoyance, humiliation or distress to others; and
- Does not allow the use of cameras/ mobile phone cameras in toilets, washing and changing areas.

## **Procedures for Dealing with Cyber-Bullying**

The School will follow the procedures set out in this policy (and the Group Safeguarding policy where relevant) for incidents of cyber-bullying, taking such disciplinary action that is considered reasonable in the circumstances, with a view to regulating pupil conduct and protecting the reputation of the School, and the welfare of its pupils.

Although cyber-bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws that may apply to communications of a harassing or threatening manner or the unauthorised publication of private images, upskirting, sharing nudes/semi-nudes and sexting. Where the School considers that a reported incident of cyber-bullying may amount to a criminal offence, it will inform the Police.

## **Electronic Devices**

In response to an allegation of cyber-bullying, certain staff are permitted to conduct a search for electronic devices, such as a pupil's mobile phone, with the authority of the Head. Staff do not require the consent of the pupil, or their parents to undertake a search, provided they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil is in possession of a prohibited item. The search will be conducted in accordance with the procedure set out in the Group Searches – Guidance and Protocol.

Where a search finds an electronic device that is prohibited by the School rules, or where the member of staff undertaking the search reasonably suspects that the electronic device has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence or cause personal injury or damage to property, the School may examine any data or files on the device, where there is good reason to do so, for example, where there has been an allegation of cyber-bullying. Parental consent to search through electronic devices is not required.

The School may also erase any data or files from the device if the School considers there to be good reason to do so, unless there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the device may contain evidence in relation to a criminal offence, where the files should not be deleted and the device must be given to the Police without delay.

If, following a search, the member of staff determines that the device does not contain any evidence in relation to an offence, or are advised by the Police following a report to them that they will not take any further action to investigate an alleged offence, the School can decide whether it is appropriate to delete any files or data from the device, and may retain the device as evidence of a breach of this policy and/or the relevant School's Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy. The School may then take steps to sanction the pupil in accordance with the relevant School's Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy, where appropriate. In the event that the search highlights a safeguarding concern in respect of any pupil, the School will follow the procedures set out in the Group's Safeguarding and Protecting the Welfare of Pupils Policy.

The School will keep a record of all searches carried out, including the results of any search, and the actions taken following that search.

## **8. EYFS Children**

The Group's youngest children are encouraged to behave towards each other with kindness and consideration. They are encouraged to learn to look after their own possessions and to respect others' possessions. We expect them to be honest, helpful and polite, and to work hard and to listen to others. They should respect everyone and learn to value differences and diversity. The Nursery Manager, Head of Pre-Prep and The Head of Prep oversee the management of behaviour in the EYFS setting alongside the Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy in the EYFS settings.

We explain to our EYFS children why some forms of behaviour are unacceptable and hurtful to others. We rarely need to impose sanctions in the EYFS setting; but in line with the Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy some sanctions following the flow chart may be necessary. Occasionally, a child may be sent to see the people above, who will explain the inappropriateness of a particular action and introduce a more appropriate action; but such instances are rare. Parents are always informed when any sanction or reproof is needed towards their child, and in cases of repeated instances of hurtful or inappropriate behaviour, parents will be invited into the School to discuss the situation with the child's teacher and members of Prep SLT will agree a joint way of handling the difficulty.

Copies of our Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy for the Schools including for EYFS children, and the Early Years Policy can be found on the School's website.

## **9. Child-on-Child Abuse**

Bullying can sometimes amount to child-on-child abuse, which is defined as abuse by one or more pupils against another pupil. The pupils will not necessarily be the same ages/year groups. Child-on-child abuse is a specific safeguarding concern. It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse and know how to identify it and report it.

If staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse they should speak to their Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead). Child-on-child abuse will be dealt with according to the procedures and protocols outlined in the Group's Safeguarding and Protecting the Welfare of Pupils Policy, rather than this Anti-bullying Policy. Please see the Safeguarding Policy for details regarding the definition of such abuse, and how the School will approach it.

## **10. Complaints Procedure**

Parents and pupils are encouraged to use our Complaints Procedure (which is published on our website) if they feel that any concerns about bullying (or anything else) are not being addressed properly. Parents of EYFS children should be aware that they have the right to refer a complaint directly to the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), if they are unhappy with the way in which their complaint has been handled.

## **11. Monitoring and Review**

The School will record all incidents of reported bullying in accordance with this policy.

The Head or a designated member of SLT will review all incidents of reported bullying to help identify patterns of behaviour, so that the School can take appropriate steps to address bullying behaviours within the School. Records of bullying incidents will also be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the School's anti-bullying procedures, and to highlight any necessary amendments.

This policy is reviewed and updated at least annually, by the Group Executives and approved by the Education Committee of the Court of Governors.

This Policy was approved by the Education Committee of the Court of Governors on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

Date of Policy: September 2024

Review Date for Policy: Summer 2025

## Appendix 1: Examples of Bullying

### Physical Bullying may involve:

- Hitting or kicking someone;
- Jostling, shoving, pushing someone;
- Spitting at someone;
- Invading someone's body space;
- Physically humiliating someone;
- Taking, damaging or hiding someone's property;
- Invading someone's living space or intruding on their bedspace.
- "Benching"

If physical bullying involves assault, actual bodily harm or wounding it is a criminal offence.

### Verbal Bullying may involve:

- Spoken comments;
- Written notes;
- Emails or text messages;
- Improper use of websites and social media platforms;
- Phone calls;
- The defacing of notices;
- Name-calling, spreading rumours, publicly blaming someone for something they haven't done;
- Circulating unflattering drawings or photographic images of someone.

### Indirect or Manipulative Bullying may involve:

- Ostracising a fellow pupil by refusing to sit alongside them in class, in the Dining Hall, etc. (or by moving away when he/she comes and sits down);
- The manipulation of social networks to ostracise, marginalize or intimidate individuals;
- Publishing photographs or images of someone that are intended to occasion mockery or gossip;
- Encouraging others to become the agents of physical or verbal bullying against one's intended victim.

### Bullying characterised by racism, sexism, homophobia and the exploitation of disability may involve:

- Spoken comments about someone (their friends or a member of their family), or about some group of pupils;
- Written notes about someone (their friends or a member of their family), or about some group of pupils;
- Emails, web postings or text messages about someone (their friends or a member of their family), or about some group of pupils;
- Phone calls about someone (their friends or a member of their family), or about some group of pupils;
- The defacing of notices with snide remarks about someone (their friends or a member of their family), or about some group of pupils.

## **Sexual Bullying may involve:**

- Bullying that seeks to hurt people by drawing attention to their body shape, hair colour, manner of dress, alleged sexual attractiveness (or lack of it), close friendships (or the absence of intimate relationships in an individual's life);
- Physical action of a sexually intimidating nature (by the invasion of body space, inappropriate touching);
- Spreading rumours about an individual's lifestyle (or the lifestyle of a close friend or relative);
- Spoken comments, written notes, emails, web postings, text messages, phone calls about someone (their friends or a member of their family), or about some group of pupils;
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm;

## **Bullying focused on religion, culture or family background may involve:**

- Spoken comments, written notes, emails, web postings etc. that highlight an individual's religion or culture with the purpose of mocking them for cultural or religious difference;
- Comments, web postings etc. that mock a particular religious or cultural tradition for the purpose of discomforting an individual or group within the Group:
- Pejorative religious or cultural descriptors.
- Gossip about an individual's family circumstances, spreading stories about (for example) their being adopted, a parent in a same-sex relationship, a relation in the news for negative reasons.

## **Specific examples of cyber-bullying include:**

- Sending abusive, insulting or malicious text messages;
- Sending abusive, insulting or malicious e-mails;
- Posting abusive or malicious messages on websites, using blogs, personal websites, on-line personal polling sites etc.;
- Posting on a social network site facts or photographs of someone with the intention to embarrass or belittle them in the eyes of others;
- Indulging in malicious or spiteful conversations in chat-rooms;
- Spreading abuse, malice or scurrilous gossip by other electronic means;
- Hacking into social networking sites and removing personal material;
- Filming fights or assaults (e.g. "happy slapping" clips) using mobile phone cameras and circulating these using cell phone networks or e-mail;
- Making repeated silent calls to a mobile phone or leaving abusive messages on voice mail;
- "Frapping" - using a pseudonym or someone else's telephone or e-mail account) for anonymity when indulging in bullying.
- "Catfishing" - luring someone into a relationship by means of a fictitious online persona
- "Upskirting" - in the first instance and the sharing of any images by the perpetrator and the passing on of these images by another party. 'Upskirting' typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is now a criminal offence.
- Cyberflashing - sending images of one's genitals to strangers online, which became a criminal offense on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024,
- Sextortion - individuals being forced into paying money or meeting another financial demand, after a person has threatened to release nude or semi-nude photos of them (this could be a real photo, or a fake image created of the victim by the person threatening its release

## Appendix 2: Additional Sources of Guidance and Information

Outside agencies who can offer support are:

**Childline:** 0800 1111 a freephone, confidential helpline for children and young people providing advice and support by phone and online 24 hours a day.

**NSPCC:** 0808 800 5000 a helpline for parents, adults and young persons for advice and support to report suspected or incidents of bullying.

**Samaritans:** 08457 90 90 90 or freephone number 116 123, a helpline for advice for parents, adults and young persons. Or email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) ( 24 hr response)

**EACH:** 0808 1000 143 a freephone actionline for children and young people experiencing homophobic bullying Monday to Friday 10am to 5pm.

**ACE Education**, 72 Durnsford Road, London, N11 2EJ

<http://www.ace-ed.org.uk/>

Advice line for parents on all matters concerning Schools

ACE Education telephone advice line: 0300 0115142

Mon-Wed 10.00am-1.00pm Term Time

### Children's Legal Centre

<https://www.childrenslegalcentre.com/>

Tel: 0845 120 2948

(Mon-Fri: 10 am - 12.30 pm and 2 pm - 4.30 pm).

Publications and free advice line on legal issues.

### Kidscape

2 GROSVENOR GARDENS, LONDON, SW1W 0DH. TEL: 020 7730 3300

Has a wide range of publications for young people, parents and teachers.

Due to current circumstances, the Parent Advice Line is currently operating an email and Whatsapp based service (please provide your mobile number by email):9am - 12pm every Monday and Tuesday morning.

### Family Lives

520 Highgate Studios, 53-79 Highgate Road, Kentish Town, London, NW5 1TL.

Tel: 0808 800 2222.

[askus@familylives.org.uk](mailto:askus@familylives.org.uk)

National helpline for parents: (Mon-Fri 9-9; Sat 9.30-5; Sun 10-3).

### Websites:

There are numerous useful sites for which updated links can be found on the DfE website at [www.education.gov.uk/](http://www.education.gov.uk/)

**ChildNet International:** Specialist resources for young people to raise awareness of online safety and how to protect themselves

**The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)** <http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

**Digizen:** provides online safety information for educators, parents, carers and young people Advice on Child Internet Safety 1.0: The UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCCIS) has produced universal guidelines for providers on keeping children safe online

Further information on Cyberbullying and support for School staff can be found at [http://old.digizen.org/downloads/cyberbullying\\_teachers.pdf](http://old.digizen.org/downloads/cyberbullying_teachers.pdf)

**Useful reading:**

- 'Bullying; Wise Guide' by Michele Elliott
- 'Don't Pick on Me: How to Handle Bullying' by Rosemary Stone 'Your child bullying' by J Alexander
- '101 Ways to deal with bullying' – a guide for parents, by M Elliott 'Keeping Safe: A practical guide to talking with children, by Kidscape 'Helping children cope with bullying' by S Lawson
- 'Confident children: a parents' guide to helping children feel good', G Lindenfield 'Bullying and how to fight it: A Guide for families', by A Mellor
- 'Fighting, teasing and bullying: Simple and effective ways to help your child', by J Pearce
- 'The bullying problem: How to deal with difficult children, by A Train



## Appendix 3: Advice to Staff and Parents on Cyberbullying

Source: <http://old.digizen.org/>

### What is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is the use of Information Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else.

#### What's different about cyberbullying?

Bullying is not new, but some features of cyberbullying are different from other forms of bullying:

- 1. 24/7 and the invasion of home/personal space.** Cyberbullying can take place at any time and can intrude into spaces that have previously been regarded as safe or personal.
- 2. The audience can be very large and reached rapidly.** The difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages means the scale and scope of cyberbullying can be greater than for other forms of bullying. Electronically forwarded content is hard to control, and the worry of content resurfacing can make it difficult for targets to move on.
- 3. People who cyberbully may attempt to remain anonymous.** This can be extremely distressing for those being bullied. The person cyberbullying may never be in the same physical space as their target.
- 4. The profile of the bully and target.** Cyberbullying can take place both between peers and across generations; teachers have also been targets. Age or size are not important. Bystanders can also become accessories to the bullying; for example, by passing on a humiliating image.
- 5. Some instances of cyberbullying are known to be unintentional.** It can be the result of not thinking (something sent as a joke may be deeply upsetting or offensive to the recipient) or a lack of awareness of the consequences – for example saying something negative online about another pupil, or friend that they don't expect to be forwarded or viewed outside their immediate group.
- 6. Many cyberbullying incidents can themselves act as evidence.** This is one of the reasons why it's important to know how to respond!

#### Cyberbullying and the law.

**Education law:** Bullying is never acceptable. The school community has a duty to protect all its members and provide a safe, healthy environment. A range of Education Acts and government initiatives highlight these obligations.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006) outlines some legal powers which relate more directly to cyberbullying. Head teachers have the power 'to such an extent as is reasonable' to regulate the conduct of pupils when they are off site. The EIA also provides a defence for school staff in confiscating items such as mobile phones from pupils.

**Civil and criminal law:** Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence in UK law, there are laws that can apply in terms of harassing or threatening behaviour, for example, or indeed menacing and threatening communications. In fact, some cyberbullying activities could be criminal offences under a range of different laws, including the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, which has both criminal and civil provision, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, section 127 of the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.

'I felt that no one understood what I was going through. I didn't know who was sending me these messages, and I felt powerless to know what to do.'

**A pupil**



## APPENDIX 4 - HOW IS TECHNOLOGY USED TO BULLY? Source: <http://old.digizen.org/>

| Technology:  | Great for:   | Examples of misuse:   |
|--|--|---|
|  <b>Mobile phones</b>                               | Keeping in touch by voice or text, taking and sending pictures and film, listening to music, playing games, going online and sending emails. Useful in emergency situations and for allowing children a greater sense of independence.                           | Sending nasty calls or text messages, including threats, intimidation, harassment. Taking and sharing humiliating images. Videotaping other people being harassed and sending these to other phones or internet sites.  |
|  <b>Instant Messenger (IM)</b>                      | Text or voice chatting live with friends online. A quick and effective way of keeping in touch even while working on other things.   | Sending nasty messages or content. Using someone else's account to forward rude or mean messages via their contacts list.   |
|  <b>Chatrooms and message boards</b>               | Groups of people around the world can text or voice chat live about common interests. For young people, this can be an easy way to meet new people and explore issues which they are too shy to talk about in person.  | Sending nasty or threatening anonymous messages. Groups of people deciding to pick on or ignore individuals. Making friends under false pretences – people pretending to be someone they're not in order to get personal information that they can misuse in a range of ways – e.g. by spreading secrets or blackmailing.   |
|  <b>Email</b>                                     | Sending electronic letters, pictures and other files quickly and cheaply anywhere in the world.  | Sending nasty or threatening messages. Forwarding unsuitable content including images and video clips, or sending computer viruses. Accessing someone else's account, e.g. to forward personal emails or delete emails.   |
|  <b>Webcams</b>                                   | Taking pictures or recording messages. Being able to see and talk to someone live on your computer screen. Bringing far-off places to life or video conferencing.  | Making and sending inappropriate content. Persuading or threatening young people to act in inappropriate ways. Using inappropriate recordings to manipulate young people.   |
|  <b>Social network sites</b>                      | Socialising with your friends and making new ones within online communities. Allowing young people to be creative online, even publishing online music. Personalising homepages and profiles, creating and uploading content.                                    | Posting nasty comments, humiliating images / video. Accessing another person's account details and sending unpleasant messages, deleting information or making private information public. Groups of people picking on individuals by excluding them. Creating fake profiles to pretend to be someone else, e.g. to bully, harass or get the person into trouble. |
|  <b>Video hosting sites</b>                       | Accessing useful educational, entertaining and original creative video content and uploading your own.   | Posting embarrassing, humiliating film of someone.  |
|  <b>Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs)</b>      | School site, usually available from home and school, set up for tracking and recording student assignments, tests and activities, with message boards, chat and IM.  | Posting inappropriate messages or images. Hacking into someone else's account to post inappropriate comments or delete schoolwork.  |
|  <b>Gaming sites, consoles and virtual worlds</b> | <p>Live text or voice chat during online gaming between players across the world, or on handheld consoles with people in the same local area.</p> <p>Virtual worlds let users design their own avatars – a figure that represents them in the virtual world.</p> | <p>Name-calling, making abusive / derogatory remarks. Players may pick on weaker or less experienced users, repeatedly killing their characters.</p> <p>Forwarding unwanted messages to other devices in the immediate vicinity.</p>  |