



***“To create and sustain, with God’s help, a learning, caring and serving community where all people are valued for who they are and who they may become in the light of Jesus Christ.”***

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

**Reviewed by the Board of Directors: March 2024**

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## **Anti-Bullying Policy Supervisor: Louise Patten – (ABPS)**

### **Principles:**

All children have an absolute right to be educated in a safe and secure environment and to be protected from those who may wish to harm, degrade or abuse them.

There is never any justification for bullying and it will not be tolerated in any form. At St. Bede’s we recognise that bullying is a problem for both the victim and the bully and we endeavour at all times to address these in positive and constructive ways with the aim of providing opportunities for growth and development for the victim and bully alike. We endeavour to adopt a restorative approach wherever possible as we believe it is the most effective way of healing the wounds that bullying can inflict for all involved.

### **Objectives:**

- To develop and implement an anti-bullying policy based on a consistently implemented whole-school approach in collaboration with our whole school community.
- To raise awareness among staff, parents/carers and students about the issue of bullying and the school’s attitude towards it and to promote our school’s core principles reflected in the Mission Statement; “...all people are valued for who they are and who they may become in the light of Jesus Christ”.
- To be proactive in the prevention of bullying.
- To make students, parents and staff aware of what we agree to be bullying and the steps to take when an incident of bullying has occurred.
- To send a clear message to bullies that their behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated under any circumstances.
- To send a clear message to the victims that action will be taken swiftly and effectively in order to keep them safe and to feel secure in our community.
- To accurately record all incidents of bullying and to monitor the effectiveness of strategies used to deal with it.
- To assess the extent of the problem and ensure that the school allocates a proportionate amount of time to deal with it quickly and effectively.
- To address with bullies their unacceptable behaviour in a firm but fair, non-oppressive manner with the aim of ensuring that the behaviour stops immediately without reoccurrence and that both the bully and the victim agree a common point of understanding, acceptance and forgiveness.

## 1. Agreed Definition of Bullying:

*Behaviour by an individual or group often repeated over time, that intentionally harms another individual or group either physically or emotionally. It normally involves an imbalance of power, which makes it difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.*

Think STOP (Several Times On Purpose)

## 2. Forms of bullying:

Bullying can represent itself in a number of forms\*:

- **Physical** – being punched, pushed, physically intimidated or hurt; made to give up money or belongings; having property, clothes or belongings damaged; being forced to do something you don't want to do.
- **Verbal** – being teased in a nasty way; being called gay (whether it's true or not); insulted about your race, religion or culture, called names in other ways or having offensive, derogatory comments directed at you.
- **Indirect** – being left out, ignored or excluded from groups; being the subject of malicious gossip or rumours or relational aggression.
- **Sexual harassment** – repeated and unwelcome physical contact, comment or suggestion or jokes of a sexual nature.
- **Electronic/cyberbullying (including verbal, sexual harassment and indirect)** – via text message, instant messenger services and social network sites, email, images or videos posted on the internet or sent via mobile devices. Often it is very difficult for the victim to escape cyber-bullying as it can take place at any time of day or night which can become particularly distressing.
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** - Artificial intelligence tools are now easy to access. Staff, pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and GoogleBard. St Bede's recognised that AI has many uses to help pupils learn, but may also have the potential to be used to bully others. For example, in the use of 'Deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real. St Bede's will treat any AI used to bully pupils in line with our anti bullying and behaviour policy.

*\* Be aware that when a person is targeted due to hostility or prejudice towards that person's disability, race or ethnicity, religion or beliefs, sexual orientation or transgender identity, it could constitute a hate crime and should be reported to the school's Safeguarding Officer (AD) immediately.*

## 3. School Investigation Procedure:

Where an incident of bullying has been reported the school will consistently adhere to the following procedure:

1. **Gathering information** – This will be completed by interviewing students and gaining written statements from witnesses (which are confidential and for internal use only). While not to be shared with other parents or students, these statements may be shared with Police if requested as part of a criminal investigation. The school may also use CCTV footage (where available) or evidence provided by students' mobile phones or computer devices if necessary.
2. **Considering the information gained and forming judgements** – This may involve speaking again with students implicated in the statements.
3. **Deciding a course of action** – The course of action to be taken in relation to the bully and the victim will be considered in the context of the particular case.
4. **Communicating to all parties** – All students, parents/carers and staff involved in the case will have relevant information shared with them in relation to the outcomes of the investigation, steps taken to prevent the action reoccurring in the future and the restorative measures taken to ensure all affected students are given the opportunity to learn and grow from the incident.
5. **Record incident centrally** – The incident will be recorded centrally on SIMS in order to effectively track for any patterns or trends, or for general monitoring purposes.

6. **Monitor Situation** – The lead member of staff who has dealt with the incident will monitor the situation by checking with all affected students, teachers and parents/carers periodically to ensure the situation has been effectively resolved.

#### 4. If it is believed that bullying has taken place – STEPS TO TAKE:

##### Students:

#### Think 'STOP' (Start Telling Other People)

Tell someone immediately if you are concerned that you or someone you know may be being bullied. The people you can tell are:

- Parents or carers who can then tell the school
- A trusted adult (another relative or friend of the family) who can then tell the school
- A friend who can then tell a teacher at the school
- A prefect assigned to each Yr7, Yr8 or Yr9 form group
- A member of staff within the school, such as a form tutor, T.A. or teacher.

Students will need to be as specific about details as possible and will need to be aware that the information will be communicated to the appropriate adult within the school.

##### Staff:

Staff should recognise that incidents of bullying are normally traumatic for the victim involved. It is therefore vitally important that if a student has taken the step to report an incident of bullying it should never be ignored or marginalised, but be taken seriously and treated delicately.

Staff should bear in mind the following guidelines *if approached* with reports of bullying by a victim or witness:

- **LISTEN** – Listen sympathetically and remain calm and reassuring. Never dismiss the report and emphasise to the student that you are glad that they have had the courage to come forward. Reassure them that you believe them and will take the report seriously.
- **ACKNOWLEDGE** – Make sure that you acknowledge the student's feelings and show that you understand it is difficult for the student to discuss the matter with you. Reassure the student but explain the need to take the matter further.
- **REPORT** – Inform the relevant member of staff (see below) immediately and provide as much detail as possible (preferably a written account).

**Report bullying incidents (without delay) to one of the following members of staff if witnessed first-hand (inside or outside of the classroom), or approached by a student:**

- Louise Patten (ABPS)
- SLT Member

The following steps will be taken by the person named above:

1. If the report has come from a parent, they need to hear a response within 24 hours.
2. A clear, written (or transcribed) account of the incident needs to be obtained from the victim and all witnesses using a school incident form as soon as possible.
3. Form tutors (and if necessary certain class teachers) of the victim and bully/bullies need to be kept informed.
4. Punitive measures will be used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties concerned in line with the following agreed sanctions:
  - Official warnings to cease offending
  - Detention (after school and/or lunch and break time)
  - Time spent internally excluded

- Short fixed term exclusion
- Major fixed term exclusion (including permanent if necessary)

5. Inform parents of all outcomes.
6. In line with the school's restorative approach, agree with both the parents/carers of the victim and the parents/carers of the bully/bullies that a restorative meeting will be taking place between the victim and the bully/bullies (at a time when the victim feels strong enough to do so) and, depending on the seriousness of the incident, may require the presence of the parents at that meeting. Ensure that the bully/bullies write a sincere letter of apology which should be checked and signed by their parents/carers with the aim of handing to the victim to read through ahead of a restorative meeting.
7. Set up and manage a restorative meeting between the bully/bullies and the victim with the aim of ensuring all parties grow and develop from the experience and all feel comfortable in moving forwards from the incident.
8. Ensure that the situation is monitored following the restorative meeting in order to ensure that the process has been successful and all parties involved are happy and not repeating any negative behaviour.

### 5. Support following a bullying incident

Students who have been bullied will be helped by:

- Offering an opportunity to discuss the experience with a relevant person (i.e. form tutor, one of the named people above, prefect or if necessary a member of the Locality Team if appropriate – but determined by the wishes of the student preferably).
- Reassuring the student that the incident will be monitored and rigorously followed up to ensure it ends.
- Restoring self-esteem and confidence (primarily through an effective restorative process, but also by using the Locality Team if necessary).

Students who have bullied will be helped by:

- Discussing what has happened and explaining to them the impact of their actions.
- Discovering the reasons why that student/those students became involved.
- Establishing why their particular actions are considered to be bullying and why they need to change.
- Informing parents/carers to assist in modifying attitudes and to assist in the restorative process.
- Refer to the Locality Team, if necessary.

### 6. Whole-School Approach to Prevention of Bullying:

The anti-bullying policy is supported and consistently applied across the school by implementing the following approaches:

#### Staff:

- Whole-school staff training (INSET days) in which staff are reminded of their responsibilities and required actions (led by the designated **ABPS**)
- Collaboration with all staff when reviewing the policy at the designated review dates (led by the designated **ABPS**).

#### Students:

- Form time (during the related weekly Themes in line with our strong Christian ethos)
- Assembly programmes
- PSHE days (collapsed)
- Planned activities during Anti-Bullying week (November).
- Collaboration with students (via the senate) when reviewing the policy at the designated review dates (led by the designated **ABPS**).
- Questionnaires designed by the **ABPS** provided at set points to students in order to assess and monitor the effectiveness of the school's policy.

**Parents/Carers:**

- Collaboration with all parents/carers when reviewing the policy at the designated review dates (led by the designated Anti-Bullying Supervisor). This will take the form of a circulated email with an invitation to feedback and possibly form a working group.

**Directors:**

- The Chaplaincy Committee will present the policy document to the School Directors at the point of review. Directors will have final sign-off of the policy at that stage.

**Related Policies and Documents:**

- Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Disability and Equality with Equal Opportunities Policy
- Behaviour on School Transport Document
- PSHE Guidelines
- Mission Statement

**For further reading and advice:**

- Childline
  - [www.childline.org.uk/extra/bullyingindex.asp](http://www.childline.org.uk/extra/bullyingindex.asp)
  - Telephone: 0800 1111
- Digital parenting (Vodafone)
  - [www.vodafone.com/contents/parents.html](http://www.vodafone.com/contents/parents.html)
- Department for Education (DfE) guidelines
  - [www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying)
- Bullying Online
  - [www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)
- BBC
  - [www.bbc.co.uk/schools/bullying](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/bullying)
- Anti-Bullying Alliance
  - [www.antibullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.antibullyingalliance.org.uk)