



Notre Dame School
and
St Boniface's College
Anti Bullying Policy

Named Persons: E.Ley

Last reviewed on: March 2024

Next review due by: June 2026

'My commandment is this: love one another just as I love you.' John 15:12

Introduction

Notre Dame School and St Boniface's College are members of the Anti-Bullying Alliance. We are committed to working with students and parents to provide a learning environment where students are encouraged to be committed, respectful and safe so that all individuals can develop, free from fear of ridicule, harassment or physical threat. All children have an absolute right to be protected from others who may wish to harm, degrade or abuse them. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at our schools. This policy reflects our active commitment to promote and safeguard the welfare of students at our schools and rests within the school's Behaviour Policy.

Purpose

- To ensure that all members of the community have an understanding of what constitutes bullying.
- To make clear the school's approach to bullying
- To outline the ways in which bullying should be reported.
- To summarise the statutory duties of the school.

What is Bullying?

Definition

The Anti-Bullying Alliance defines bullying as 'the *repetitive, intentional hurting* of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an *imbalance of power*. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online.'

Types of bullying

The school recognises that there are several forms of bullying and that they can be thought of as bullying if they are done maliciously, deliberately or persistently to hurt or upset or have that effect. Bullying can occur in many ways. For example:

- Physical - Pinching, punching, pushing, kicking and hitting or any use of violence.
- Verbal - Name calling, sarcasm, persistent teasing, spreading rumours.
- Psychological - Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, damage to property, threatening gestures)
- Written - Writing graffiti, insults contained in note passing.
- Online - The use of electronic communication to deliberately upset someone else, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature, such as email and messaging apps. This can be sent from individuals and groups.

Bullying can include discrimination based on:

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|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| - Race | - Religion or beliefs |
| - Gender, including transgender | - Appearance |
| - Sexuality | - Socio-economic background |
| - Ability | |

We recognise that bullying can take place at any age and in any place. Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act (2006) gives the Head of School the right to regulate students'

conduct when they are not on school premises. This can relate to bullying incidents occurring on school or public transport, outside local shops or in any other public place when students are in school uniform. Bullying can also take place beyond school via social media. The school has limited ability to investigate or act on bullying that takes place beyond school, when the child is under the authority of their parents.

This policy applies only to incidents of bullying which take place on school premises. However, the school has an enduring interest in the welfare and conduct of its students and will respond to information it receives about bullying outside school that has an impact on the school community during the school day. This may involve providing advice regarding external sources of support that may be available to the family in supporting their child. The school will cooperate with Police enquiries when required to do so.

The difference between Bullying and Relational Conflict

Conflict is a disagreement or a difference of opinion or interests between equals. The people involved in a conflict may disagree strongly and emotions may run high. When conflict is badly managed, it may result in aggression. In a conflict, both parties have power to influence the situation. Students exchanging unpleasant comments via social media is an example of such conflict, and may not represent an instance of bullying.

Conflict may be an inevitable part of group dynamics, but bullying is not. Both relational conflict and bullying require intervention, however they will often take different forms. When trying to determine whether an issue should be regarded as bullying, the STOP acronym can be helpful; this stands for **Several Times On Purpose**.

Possible signs of bullying

Students who are being bullied may not always report it. However, there may be changes in their behaviour that may indicate to an observer that they are experiencing bullying. They may become withdrawn and nervous, they may feign illness or have unexplained injuries. They may stop eating, become aggressive or unreasonable or there may be a decline in motivation.

To those who know the child it may simply be a feeling that 'things aren't quite right'. All school staff will be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with this policy.

Roles and Responsibilities

Local CAST Board

- The Local CAST Board is responsible for ensuring that the anti-bullying policy:
- reflects the ethos and mission of CAST and of the school, and promotes the wellbeing of all members of the community.
- fulfils the statutory responsibilities of the school in relation to wellbeing, safeguarding and safety.
- is implemented across the school community.
- is reviewed and updated in the light of the review of practice, new research or best practice or changes to statutory requirements.

Head of School

The Head of school has a responsibility to advise the governors in the preparation, review and implementation of the anti-bullying policy. They have a duty to ensure the policy is consistently and effectively implemented throughout the school.

The Head of School will ensure:

- All incidents of bullying and the parties involved will be recorded and retained on a student file until the student reaches the age of 25.
- Ensure there is a named Anti Bullying champion within school.

Anti Bullying Champion

- Promote an anti-bullying environment.
- Work with SLT, ensuring that anti bullying work is kept high on the agenda.
- Collate statistics, ensuring that significant incidents are recorded.
- Noting any patterns of behaviour and raising awareness of this to the SLT.
- Create opportunities for staff to undertake appropriate training.

Staff

- Staff will actively promote anti-bullying strategies.
- If bullying is suspected, witnessed by or reported to a member of staff they will respond appropriately and record what has happened using CPOMS.
- The Pastoral Leaders will work with tutors to coordinate the investigation, ensuring parents and carers are informed and issues are resolved in a robust, effective and timely manner. Appropriate action will be taken in each case and this will vary from incident to incident.
- Action may include, but is not limited to, restorative justice meetings, social time sanctions, internal and external reset, suspension or police involvement where necessary.
- Educating young people on both the advantages and risks involved with social media is the joint responsibility of parents and carers and the school community.

Students

A student experiencing or witnessing bullying should report it in one of the following ways:

- Speaking to a trusted adult such as their form tutor, or Head of Year/House.
- Speak to a Student Leader.
- Speak to their parent or carer.
- Report online via the Tell Us Now system.
- Speak to the anti bullying champion.

Parents and Carers

- If parents and carers suspect their child is being bullied they should contact the child's tutor in the first instance.
- Parents and carers must leave the initial investigation to the school. Any attempt to resolve the issue themselves may make the matter worse. Parents and carers must understand that the school may have access to information that they do not have.
- The school will take all reasonable steps to investigate the allegations of bullying thoroughly. The school does not have the powers of the police, and does not operate in the same way. Conclusions are reached on the balance of probabilities.
- Insofar as bullying will involve the alleged victim and the alleged aggressor(s) the school will need to take into account all salient facts involving all parties.

- Bullying of our child can provoke strong protective feelings. The school will seek to understand the representation of events given to it, and will seek resolution. It cannot enact vengeance on the child of the alleged aggressor, who themselves has parents/carers, and whose view may be in contrast to that of the alleged victim.
- Parents and carers should encourage their child to talk to their tutor or other member of staff.
- Parents and Carers, as adults, will understand that such situations can be very complex, and will seek to work with the school as it seeks a positive way forwards. This may require undertakings from all parties.

Social Media

There are numerous studies that have investigated the prevalence of online bullying. The Office of National Statistics research (2020) found that 19% of 10-15 year olds have experienced at least one type of online bullying. Further research by Ofcom (2022) has found that older children in the UK are more likely to be bullied on a screen than in person.

Studies have shown that there is a strong link between mental health and bullying. Young people who have experienced bullying are more likely to experience poor wellbeing and mental health issues. Online bullying and inappropriate use of online sources can negatively affect a young person's self esteem, confidence and self image. It can contribute to an increase in low mood and anxiety together with a greater risk of access to harmful information, inappropriate images and online grooming.

The school's mobile phone policy and digital monitoring systems are used in school to limit the opportunity for online bullying within school. This therefore indicates that the majority of incidents of online bullying take place outside of school when the young person is in the care of a parent or carer.

Notre Dame and St Bonifaces strongly recommend that parents and carers do not give their child access to SMARTPhones or social media.

Educating young people on both the advantages and risks involved with social media is the joint responsibility of parents and carers and the school community. The school expects parents and carers to monitor their child's access to social media and ensure that such access is age-appropriate. (See Appendix 1). Parents and carers may also report concerns to the police, and restrict or cease their child's access to social media.

In line with its behaviour policy, the school expects the full support of parents and carers in managing their child's behaviour, including online.

Bullying of adults within the school environment

Our school takes measures to prevent and tackle bullying among students; however, it is equally important to recognise that bullying of staff and parents or carers, whether by students, parents or carers, or other staff members, within the school environment is unacceptable.

Adults (staff or parents and carers) who have been bullied or affected will be supported by:

- Offering an opportunity to discuss the concern with the designated safeguarding lead, a senior member of staff and/or the head of school.
- Advising them to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to

respond to concerns and build resilience, as appropriate.

- Where the bullying takes place either online or over the phone, the school will still investigate the concern and ensure that appropriate action is taken in accordance with the relevant school policies.
- Reporting offensive or upsetting content and/or accounts to the service provider, where the bullying has occurred online.
- Reassuring and offering appropriate support.
- Working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance.

Adults (staff and parents) who have perpetrated the bullying will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened with a senior member of staff and/or the head of school to establish the concern.
- Establishing whether a legitimate grievance or concern has been raised and signposting to the school's official complaints procedures.
- If online, requesting that content be removed.
- Instigating disciplinary, civil or legal action as appropriate or required.

Schools nationally are seeing rising instances of false allegations being made against staff. Our schools will investigate fairly, when necessary, observing all relevant safeguarding protocols and the principles of fairness enshrined in UK Law.

Where a child or adult has been responsible for, or complicit with, false allegations, the school and Trust will provide the maximum support possible to the member of staff. This may include the involvement of the member of staff's Union and/or legal representatives, and the Police, False accusations made, on balance of probabilities, knowingly by a child will result in the severest of sanctions being applied, including permanent exclusion and legal proceedings.

Legislation, Statutory Duties and Supporting Documents

There are several pieces of legislation which set out measures and actions for schools in response to bullying, as well as criminal and civil law. These include, but are not limited to:

- The Education and Inspection Act 2006, 2011
- The Equality Act 2010, which outlines the responsibilities of schools to respond to discrimination and promote equality.
- The Children Act 1989, which makes clear the expectation that bullying incidents should be addressed as a child protection issue where there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.'
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986

This policy has also been written in the light of

- DfE guidance Preventing and Tackling Bullying (2017) and supporting documents.
- Working together to Safeguard Children (2023) which stipulates that 'safeguarding' extends beyond child protection and includes issues such as health and safety and bullying.
- DfE statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)

Links to other policies

This policy is linked to a number of other policies including:

The Behaviour Policy

Safeguarding Policy
SEND Policy
The Mobile Phone Policy
CAST Positive Pupil Welfare Policy

Policy Review

The Local CAST Board will review this policy biannually and associated procedures to ensure its continuing appropriateness and effectiveness. The review will take place in consultation with the Head of School, staff and parents / carers.

APPENDIX 1

Social Media Website	Age Limit	Main Features
Facebook	13+	Newsfeed to share text, photos & videos, instant messaging, marketplace, friends, likes and comments.
Instagram	13+	Photo & video sharing, livestreaming, stories, DMs, hashtags.
Snapchat	13+	Photo & video messaging, snaps, location sharing.
TicToc	13+	Making & sharing short videos, lip-syncing.
X or Twitter	13+	Tweets (text with restricted character count), photo and video sharing, hashtags.
Wink	13+	Messaging, friends, photo sharing.
WhatsApp	16+	Text, photo & video sharing, one to one and group chats, disappearing messages. End to end encrypted. Live location sharing.
Discord	13+	A chat app that's popular with gamers. It is often used to talk to other players while playing games.
Kik	13+	Text, photo and video messages one to one or groups. The 'Meet New People' feature lets you start a conversation with random users