



Anti-bullying Policy

Aims and Objectives

At Bishop's Stortford College our community is based upon 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 to his/ her full potential. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and to co-operate with them, so that they can learn in a relaxed, but orderly, atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other, inside and outside of the College.

The College prides itself on its values of respect and mutual tolerance. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting the College maintain high standards of behaviour. It is essential that there are consistent expectations of behaviour both at school and at home, and that the College and parents co-operate closely together.

This policy is available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils on our website and on request. It is also communicated to all staff and pupils.

Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination of pupils or staff will not be tolerated by the College. We treat all of our pupils and their parents fairly, and with consideration, and we expect them to respect the staff, the College and each other, in return. All forms of bullying are unacceptable at the College and any instances of bullying will be recorded and, where appropriate, will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

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

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.

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, 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. It can take place online or in person.

The College's Response to Bullying

At the College, we always treat bullying very seriously. It conflicts sharply with the College's social and moral principles, and potentially with its policy on equal opportunities, and will not be tolerated. When incidents of bullying do occur, they are dealt with quickly and taken seriously. The College will never dismiss bullying as banter or horseplay, and all reported incidents of bullying will be dealt with by staff in accordance with this policy.

The College 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 College's first priority, however, the College 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 Behaviour Policy. Whilst bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment, sexual violence and assault, upskirting and to violent and threatening behaviour by one or more perpetrator. A culture in which sexual violence is normalised through attitudes and actions will never be tolerated. Attitudes and actions such as jokes trivialising sexual violence, victim blaming, 'slut shaming' and the objectification of women will be treated with the utmost seriousness. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying: everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are victims of bullying will be supported. 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.

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

Bullying which is related to the Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 is treated very seriously. This includes racial slurs which are never dismissed as 'banter'. Bullying incidents are logged and bullying based on protected characteristics are noted. Staff report any bullying allegations or via the CPOMS database.

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.

Bullying -Preventative Measures

The College's response to bullying does not start at the point in which a pupil has been bullied. We take the following preventative measures in order to create an environment that prevents bullying from becoming a problem at the College in the first place:

Pupils

- The College promotes an ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat each other with respect at all times, inside and outside of school;
- All new pupils (including boarders and EYFS pupils) are briefed thoroughly on the College's expected standards of behaviour. They are told what to do if they experience or witness bullying. We guarantee that those who report bullying in good faith will not be punished and will be supported;
- We use assemblies to explain the College's policy on bullying. Our PSHE, Empower and Pathways programmes are structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the College. 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 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 boarders are made aware how to report anxieties to their House Master/ Mistress or to another member of the pastoral team;
- Senior School pupils can request support via the House concern box, or the wearelistening@bishopsstortfordcollege.org e-mail account, and in the Prep School via wearelisteningprep@bishopsstortfordcollege.org or via concern boxes in their form rooms
- The Day and Boarding Houses in the Senior School 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; this information is displayed in all Prep School Form rooms , the boarding house and along the Prep School corridors
- We provide leadership training to our student Heads of School and their team of prefects, in the Senior School, which specifically covers the importance of offering support and assistance to younger and to vulnerable pupils in that section of the College; and
- The College 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 College's anti-bullying policy and on how to react to, and record allegations of bullying at the College on CPOMS software. The College will ensure that all College staff understand the principles of the College's policy, the College'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 College 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 children with SEND , LGBT pupils and boarders who are considered vulnerable groups. The College 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 (see below for record keeping).
- In the Senior School, we have a team of House Masters and Mistresses and their teams who support the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority, and who are alert to possible signs of bullying;
In the Prep School the Heads of Year lead their teams of Form Tutors who are appropriately trained and experienced; they support the Prep School Deputy Head (Pastoral); in the Pre-Prep the Class Teachers are all appropriately trained and support the Head of the Pre-Prep and the EYFS Lead.
- Our pastoral teams in all sections of the College give support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both victims and bullies. Regular updates are provided to staff.

- Our trained School Counsellor is an important part of our pastoral support service, providing specialist skills of assessment and counselling. She is available to give confidential advice and counselling support to pupils who can refer themselves to her when they have social, emotional, or behavioural concerns. On occasion, a member of one of the pastoral teams may refer a pupil to her as appropriate;
- The College Chaplain will give support and guidance to pupils of all faiths 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 tolerance, understanding and respect for others in a multi-faith community];
- Staff are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class. They are trained to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour at all times;
- In boarding houses, there are strong teams of tutors supporting the House Master/Mistress and the Matrons, who act *in loco parentis*. Staff are aware that boarding houses provide more opportunities for bullying and are therefore always vigilant and alert to signs of issues with or between boarders. The informal house environment is important in reinforcing a pupil's standards and values, providing the opportunity for friendly, informal discussion of matters of concern to the individual pupil outside the formal classroom;
- The College has the right, and duty, 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 College has the right to take disciplinary measures in respect of such incidents. Disciplinary measures will be taken in accordance with the College's Behaviour Policy and will be applied in a fair, consistent and reasonable manner, taking into account the needs of SEND and vulnerable pupils; and
- Staff will always consider the motive behind bullying behaviour and whether it raises any concerns for the welfare of the perpetrator. If staff reasonably suspect that a pupil may be suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, they should follow the procedures set out in the College Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and discuss their concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) for their section of the College without delay.

Parents

- This policy is readily available on the College website and is available in hard copy format upon request so that parents are clear on the College's approach to bullying and what to do if their child experiences bullying;
- We encourage close contact between the House Master/ Mistress in the Senior School and Form Tutors/ Class Teachers in the Prep School and Pre-Prep 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 College 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 anti-bullying policy.

Procedures for dealing with reported bullying

The College ensures that all instances of, or concerns about bullying and cyber-bullying, both on and away from College premises are recorded properly using CPOMS for all alleged bullying incidents.

This will enable the College to identify patterns of behaviour and to evaluate the effectiveness of this anti-bullying policy.

The College 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.

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 (the "Case Handler"), and will reassure and support the pupils involved, without promising absolute confidentiality; In the Prep School the Case Handler will discuss the situation with the Head of Year to confirm the most appropriate person to lead any investigation. In the Pre-Prep, the Head of the Pre-Prep would tend to take the lead role. All information will be recorded using CPOMS.
2. The Case Handler will inform an appropriate member of the College's pastoral team about the bullying allegation as soon as possible;
3. The victim and the alleged perpetrator/s will each be interviewed individually by the Case Handler on their own (or, if appropriate, with a suitable person present for support) and asked to write their account of events;
4. Where the Case Handler considers that the reported bullying behaviour may be criminal, or considers that there may be a risk of harm to someone, the Case Handler will discuss this with the College Head, and only they will report the matter to the Police without delay if considered necessary;
5. The incident/s will be recorded, signed and dated by the Case Handler. It will then be given to the Deputy Head (Pastoral) in the Senior School, the Deputy Head (Pastoral)'s files in the Prep School and the Head of the Pre-Prep files in the Pre-Prep, who is responsible for securely storing all records of bullying and other serious disciplinary offences.
6. In the Senior School, the Deputy Head (Pastoral) will inform the House Master / Mistresses of both the alleged perpetrator(s) and the victim(s) as soon as possible. In very serious incidents, the Head should be informed; in the Prep School the Deputy Head (Pastoral) will inform the Head of Year and the Head of the Prep School; the Head of the Pre-Prep will liaise with the College Head if the incident is sufficiently serious.
7. The victim will be interviewed again at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the alleged perpetrator(s). They will be offered support to develop a strategy to help them. It will be made clear to them why revenge or retaliation is inappropriate.
8. The perpetrator(s) will be interviewed again at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the victim, and it will be made clear why their behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. They will be offered guidance on modifying their behaviour. The College Behaviour Policy may also be invoked. Sanctions under the Behaviour Policy might include, for

example, detention and withdrawal of privileges. The College may exclude a pupil, either temporarily or permanently, in cases of serious or persistent bullying, or in the event that the support put in place for the perpetrator(s) does not result in the modification of behaviour to an acceptable level.

9. The parents/ guardians of all parties will be informed and may be invited into School to discuss the matter, and the appropriate sanctions under the [Behaviour Policy and/or Exclusion, Removal and Review Policy]. The parents' support will be sought in respect of preventative measures, and any concerns of either party will be addressed;
10. A way forward, including where appropriate disciplinary sanctions and support for the perpetrator(s), should be determined, and where possible agreed with all parties. This should recognise that suitable support may be needed by the pupils who are being bullied, and also by the pupils who bully others, as well as dealing with disciplinary measures in accordance with the College Behaviour Policy if appropriate;
11. As part of this process, a meeting involving all the parties, with close staff supervision, may be convened to help develop a strategy which enables all concerned to close the episode;
12. A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place and put on record;
13. In very serious cases, and only after the College Head has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police, the DSL or to Children's Services. However, in many cases it will be possible to resolve such issues internally under this policy and the College Behaviour Policy.

Cyberbullying

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 aggressive, intentional act often carried out repeatedly over time, and often against a victim who cannot easily defend themselves. The College acknowledges that cyber-bullying may take place inside the College, outside of College 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 Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok or YouTube);
- Using e-mail to message others in a threatening or abusive manner; or
- Hijacking/ cloning e-mail accounts.

The College 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 derogative comments on online platforms, upskirting and sexting.

The College 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 College has regard to the DfE's non-statutory guidance on *Teaching online safety in school* (updated June 2019).

Prevention of cyber-bullying

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

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its E-Safety and Acceptable Use Policy. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our IT Department monitors pupils' use;
- May impose disciplinary sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse, of the internet in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.
- Issues all pupils with their own personal College 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 cameras/ mobile phone cameras in toilets, washing and changing areas.

Procedures for dealing with cyber-bullying

The College will follow the procedures set out in this policy and the E-Safety Policy 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 College, 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 and sexting. Where the College 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 of electronic devices, such as a pupil's mobile phone, with the authority of the College 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, and provided they have the College Head's prior consent to undertake a search.

The search will be conducted in accordance with the procedure set out in the Searching Pupils or their Possessions Policy.

Where a search finds an electronic device that is prohibited by the College 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 College

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 College may also erase any data or files from the device if the College 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 College 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 the Behaviour Policy. The College may then take steps with the student in accordance with the Behaviour Policy, where appropriate. In the event that the search highlights a safeguarding concern in respect of any pupil, the College will follow the procedures set out in the College Safeguarding Policy.

The College will keep a record of all searches carried out, including the results of any search, and the actions taken following that search. These records will be kept by the pastoral leads in each school.

EYFS Children

Even the College'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 Head of Pre-Prep is in charge of the management of behaviour in the EYFS setting.

The College explains to our EYFS children why some forms of behaviour are unacceptable and hurtful to others. If a child does carry out a form of behaviour that is unacceptable, the child would be given thinking time in a quiet place in the classroom. This links in with the PSED self-regulation and teaching the children how to manage their emotions and behaviour. Occasionally, a child may be sent with an adult to see the Head of the Pre-Prep, who will explain the inappropriateness of a particular action. Parents are informed when any sanction is needed towards their child, and in cases of repeated instances of hurtful or inappropriate behaviour, parents will be invited into the College to discuss the situation with the child's teacher and, where appropriate the Head of the Pre-Prep, to agree a behaviour management plan that would fit the needs of the individual child.

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 boarders and of EYFS children should be aware that they have the right to refer a complaint directly to Ofsted, if they are unhappy with the way in which their complaint has been handled (the Complaints Procedure explains how to complain to Ofsted).

Monitoring and review

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

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

This policy is reviewed and updated at least annually, by the Governing Council.