ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION

This anti-bullying policy forms an integral part of the School pupil behaviour policy and should be read in conjunction with it.

Policy of the School on bullying
Bullying of any sort is not tolerated at the School. Bullying can be child-on-child, teacher to pupil or student to teacher. Bullying can happen on the School premises or away from the School (including, for example, on the journey to and from School, at clubs or online). Wherever the School receives a complaint about bullying it has a duty to act. Where the bullying that has occurred is so serious that it may constitute a criminal offence, the School will report the incident to the police.

Aims of this policy

- To establish an effective anti-bullying policy that applies to all boys, parents and staff and which supports a culture where bullying is unlikely to occur (prevention) and enables swift action to be taken if and when bullying does occur (intervention).
- To define the nature of bullying, including cyber-bullying, so that it can be recognised.
- To define the roles and responsibilities of staff, parents and boys in preventing and tackling bullying.
- To link the School's anti-bullying policy to its other policies on behaviour (sanctions) and safeguarding.

This policy is informed by guidance from the DfE contained in:

- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (2017)
- Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff (2014)

Availability of this policy
This policy is available to all staff and parents via the School website in the downloads section: http://www.choirschool.com/downloads.html.

Responsibility of parents
Support for the School's anti-bullying policy is a condition of joining the School and parents have a responsibility to support the School in imposing sanctions if, in the professional opinion of the School, their son is responsible for bullying.

Complaints procedure
Parents are encouraged to contact the School if they have a concern about bullying. If they consider that it is necessary to make a formal complaint about the School's anti-bullying policy, procedures or sanctions they may use the complaints procedure (see the downloads section of the website http://www.choirschool.com/downloads.html).

Management of bullying in the Pre-Prep School
Day to day responsibility for preventing and tackling bullying lies with the Head of Pre-Prep.

Head of Pre-Prep
Juliet Rodger
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The Head of Pre-Prep ensures that Class Teachers and other staff have the training appropriate to their role and awareness to deal with bullying and that actual cases are handled according to the School's policy and procedures. This is provided through INSET, staff meetings and, in some cases, courses.

Management of bullying in the Prep School
Day to day responsibility for preventing and tackling bullying lies with the Deputy Head (Pastoral).

Deputy Head (Pastoral)
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The Deputy Head (Pastoral) ensures that Form Tutors, boarding house staff and other staff have the training appropriate to their role and awareness to deal with bullying and that actual cases are handled according to the School's policy and procedures. This is provided through INSET, staff meetings and, in some cases, courses (e.g. through the School's BSA membership).

Weekly SMT meetings monitor pastoral issues and the Governors monitor issues through the termly pastoral committee. One Governor in particular is named for safeguarding (currently Maria Strauss).

The School also employs a counsellor/listener who can be consulted on anti-bullying.

PART 2: WHAT IS BULLYING?

What is bullying?

The DfE defines bullying and cyber-bullying as follows:[1]

> *Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; teachers and schools have to make their own judgements about each specific case.*

What is cyber-bullying?

> *The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.*

Cyberbullying can involve social networking sites, like Facebook, WhatsApp, Snapchat and Instagram, emails and mobile phones (texts/photos/videos).

Who might bully or be bullied?

The DfE guidance explains the dynamics that often underpin bullying:

> *Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.*

Although bullying can happen to all children, some pupils may be particularly vulnerable to bullying:

- those with SEN or disabilities;
- those going through a personal or family crisis;
- those suffering from a health problem;
- children in care, especially when a newcomer in a school;
- those with caring responsibilities, who may become socially isolated (and may, therefore, turn to social media for friendship, or to 'get their own back').

What is not bullying?

The School distinguishes between bullying and teasing. However, teasing may be considered as bullying if it is sustained or malicious. It is important to consider the context before labelling behaviour as bullying.

[1] Preventing and tackling bullying

Child-on-child abuse and abusive comments and interactions will not be tolerated by the School or passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', or 'part of growing up'.

The consequences of bullying
While many cases of bullying will be straightforward to rectify, the School reminds its staff, parents and boys of the serious effects that bullying can have. Consequences include psychological damage, eating disorders and self-harm.

Bullying on the basis of protected characteristics is taken particularly seriously.

Recognising the signs of bullying
Staff and parents should be alert to the signs of bullying, which may include any of the following:

- reluctance to attend School;
- excessive anxiety, low self-confidence, withdrawn or unusually quiet behaviour;
- preferring the company of adults to peers;
- not doing School work, or doing so poorly; submitting copied, interfered with or spoilt work;
- frequent absence, erratic attendance, lateness;
- books, bags and other belongings suddenly going missing, or being damaged;
- change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary);
- frequent complaints of stomach pains, headaches, etc.;
- unexplained cuts and bruises;
- displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact;
- difficulty in sleeping; nightmares;
- talking of suicide or running away.

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

Allegations of bullying by staff
Staff should be aware that the School's anti-bullying policy applies to all members of the School community (boys, parents and staff, both teaching and non-teaching). Concerns or allegations about bullying by staff will be investigated using the steps outlined in the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

PART 3: PREVENTION

Preventing bullying at the School
The School's aim is to 'create an environment that prevents bullying from being a serious problem in the first place.'[2] The School promotes an environment such as this in three main ways: the ethos of the School; a culture of high expectations and personal achievement; and clear understanding of the School's policies among both boys and parents.

[2] Preventing and tackling bullying,

Ethos
The School's Catholic ethos places the values of the Gospel – love of God and neighbour – in the heart school life. Prayers, Mass, Religious Studies and the example of teachers all reinforce the imperative to 'love thy neighbour as thyself'. The School is a centre of human formation where academic potential, extra-curricular talents and moral formation come together to form fully integrated young people.[3]

The moral values of the School are also conveyed on a rational basis in PSHCE, which is a natural-law-based programme that teaches how the human virtues – prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude – lead to flourishing and happiness. Boys learn that unkind behaviour harms the victim (who suffers) and also the perpetrator (whose character does not flourish and therefore distances himself from happiness).

Where boys are dealing with sensitive issues – for example, bereavement or the sickness of a relative – they are given people who they can turn to, including teachers, the School counsellor.

High expectations of our pupils
The School believes that if its pupils sense that they are flourishing in the academic and extra-curricular life then they are less likely to bully others or be subjected to bullying. The School therefore puts the needs of the boy at the centre of its planning. From the fully-engaged responsibilities of chorister life, to the academic curriculum and the range of extra-curricular (music and sports) activities and clubs – and their associated rewards systems – boys have many opportunities to feel that they are being stretched and achieving things at School.

Communication
It is vital that the School's policies on behaviour and bullying are understood and supported by staff, parents and boys. Therefore, staff are trained in the School's anti-bullying policy and procedures as part of annual INSET and know that supervision is a vital part of prevention (e.g. on the playground); parents are told about the School's policy in the *Meet Your Son's Teachers* meetings in September and via the School website and Parents' Handbooks; boys are taught about anti-bullying in assemblies, PSHCE and workshops; the boys' prep diaries contain an anti-bullying section ('Love thy neighbour'); and they are encouraged to be 'whistle-blowers', not silent bystanders.

Boarders and bullying
Boarders are especially vulnerable as they are away from home and lack the daily support base of their parents.

Unlike at day schools, boarders who are being bullied (off line) cannot escape their bullies for long periods of time as they do not go home as often.

[3] See The Catholic School, paragraphs 28-30.

Boarding staff are fully aware of this and the pastoral provision of boarders is one of the highest priorities of the School. Boarders receive the following provision:

- the Head of Boarding has overall pastoral responsibility for the boarders and is available to listen to concerns and worries;
- there is a weekly boarding staff meeting and the academic staff are briefed on pastoral concerns;
- there is always a high staff-pupil ratio in the boarding house (a house master, first aider and GAP student);
- boarders know who the independent listener and DSL is and how to contact them (see 'Pastoral Information for Boarders', in the Parent Handbook for boarding);
- boarders know how to phone and email home;
- boarders have their own complaints procedure which is displayed in the boarders' telephone booth.

Preventing cyberbullying

The School recognises that boys are just as likely to experience bullying through online games and social media as in a face-to-face situation. The School therefore makes the following provision to prevent cyberbullying:

- all parents and boys sign an ICT code of conduct;
- the School has a filtering system to prevent access to unsuitable web pages;
- the School will treat misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet, as a serious disciplinary offence;
- all boys are issued with a School email address which they must use at School;
- the School holds assemblies and runs workshops on the safe use of mobile phones, the internet and social networking sites (for boys, parents and staff); these cover blocking, removing contacts from 'buddy lists' and sharing personal data as well as keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe;
- mobile phones and other electronic devices are not permitted in School. Boys in Years 7 and 8 who travel unaccompanied may – with prior written permission from the Deputy Head (Pastoral) – drop off their phone at the School gate upon arriving at School and collect it from the School gate upon leaving School;
- the use of cameras on mobile phones is not allowed at any time.

PART 4: INTERVENTION

The School has a clear anti-bullying policy and procedures which are communicated to staff, parents and boys on a regular basis, and whenever there is an apparent incident of bullying the School will act quickly, fairly and consistently.

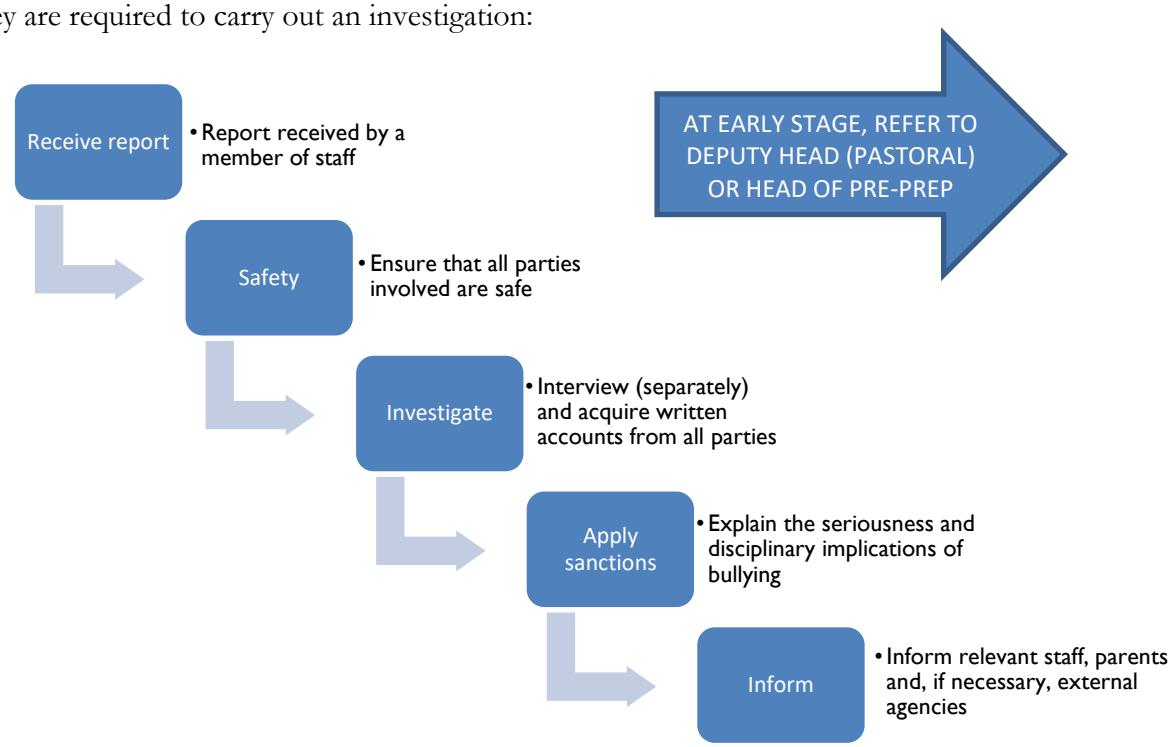
Bullying versus child-on-child abuse
It can be difficult to distinguish between behaviour which does not constitute abuse, such as low-level bullying, and abusive behaviour.

Child-on-child abuse is any form of abuse perpetrated by a child towards another child. It can take many different forms including, but not limited to:

- serious bullying (including cyber-bullying);
- physical abuse (such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling,) or otherwise causing physical harm;
- sexual violence and sexual harassment;
- serious youth violence, hazing and initiation rituals;
- harmful sexual behaviour and sexting;
- and gender-based violence.

If a staff member has any concerns about child-on-child abuse, s/he should discuss these with the DSL or the Deputy DSL and the matter will be handled in accordance with the actions listed in the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The reporting procedure
Any member of staff may receive a complaint of bullying. Staff should follow the procedure below if they are required to carry out an investigation:



Contacting parents
In any cases where a boy has either been bullied or has been accused of bullying someone else, the parents will be informed as soon as possible and a meeting arranged. However, it may not be possible to contact parents immediately as at least a preliminary investigation will be necessary. The School should do whatever it can to resolve the issue within the School day so that parents can be informed before collection/departure. The School will remind parents that they should not seek to reprimand another boy for bullying.

In cases of serious misconduct
Where serious misconduct has occurred – such as where serious bodily harm has occurred – the Head Master/ Deputy Head (Pastoral) will be obliged to inform the police. Similarly, where the School is concerned for the wellbeing of a boy – whether the victim or perpetrator of bullying – it may be necessary to contact outside agencies, e.g. the LADO.[4] Where the School feels that significant emotional or psychological harm has been suffered as a result of bullying it will endeavour to provide the pastoral support needed to overcome it.

Sanctions and exclusion
The sanctions for bullying depend on the nature and context of the incident. The School's range of sanctions are outlined in the behaviour policy. The School may exclude a boy, either temporarily or permanently, in cases of severe and persistent bullying and in the event that the support put in place for the bully does not result in the modification of behaviour to an acceptable level.

Recording, monitoring and responding to incidents of bullying
The member of staff who has received the concern/complaint should make an accurate record of all the information gathered (e.g. written accounts of the parties and any witnesses). They should email the Deputy Head (Pastoral). The Deputy Head (Pastoral) is responsible for making or ensuring timely, full and accurate records of cases of bullying or suspected bullying. They will store any such records securely in their office.

Monitoring long-term impact and behaviour
Where a boy has been bullied or has bullied another boy, the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and other staff will carefully monitor the long-term impact and behaviour of the incident. The perpetrator will be informed of the consequences of a recurrence and offered coping strategies to avoid any such behaviour. The victim will also be informed about what to do in such an event and discouraged from seeking revenge. As a Catholic School we promote the belief that when we make mistakes we should seek forgiveness, and that when forgiveness is sincerely sought it should be given: 'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.' In some circumstances, it may be desirable to bring both parties together to enable reconciliation.

[4] For contact details, see the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.