ST CATHERINE'S SCHOOL
— TWICKENHAM —

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY
(Senior and Prep)

SCHOOL MISSION

We are inspired by St Catherine of Siena, who said 'Be who God wants you to be, and you will set the world on fire', to form young women of confidence and compassion, ready for service and leadership in the world. We fulfil our mission through these values:

Community: a place of cheerfulness, dignity and tolerance, where all are welcome
Faith: a Christ-centred school with time for reflection; a culture of gratitude and friendship
Courage: with self-knowledge, resilience and integrity, and a readiness for challenge
Scholarship: where gifts are developed through curiosity, imagination and ambition
Service: commitment to others, to stewardship, and to justice and hope for all

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Introduction

St Catherine's prides itself on being a warm, welcoming and respectful community. The strong pastoral ethos is built on the quality of relationships within this community, and we recognise the fundamental importance of friendship, and the role this plays in supporting academic learning, fostering involvement in co-curricular activities, and in developing character. In line with our ethos, and with due regard to the 'Every Child Matters Agenda', we seek to provide a happy, safe and inclusive environment, where we prioritise the wellbeing of all members of the community.

As such, St Catherine's is firm in the belief that any and all forms of bullying have no place within our community, and any bullying-type behaviour will meet with a robust response, which takes into account the specific features of each individual case. We believe strongly in working with those who carry out bullying to enable them to alter their behaviour for the better, and seek to facilitate the rehabilitation of their character so they can go on to complete a successful school career with us. Nevertheless, we are extremely mindful of the harmful impact of bullying on the targets in particular, but also on the wider atmosphere of the school, and are therefore prepared to use the full range of sanctions available to us as necessary.

The school also recognises that bullying behaviour may have safeguarding implications, under the category of 'child-on-child abuse', as detailed in KCSIE statuatory guidance.

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1. Key terminology

St Catherine's School defines bullying as deliberately hurtful behaviour. This term will usually be reserved to refer to behaviour that is repeated over a period of time, although the term bullying may also refer to a single, isolated incident of deliberate unkind behaviour (emotional and/or physical). Behaviour is categorised as bullying when it involves an individual (or a group) going out of her way deliberately and persistently to threaten, intimidate, abuse or hurt someone else.

While this behaviour can occur away from the school site and/or outside of school hours, particularly when largely perpetrated online, the impact can be felt by the target throughout the school day. It is also often part of a wider pattern of behaviour, some of which is occurring on the school grounds/during the school day. As such, pupils and parents should expect that misconduct of this type may be dealt with under the terms of this policy, regardless of the time/location of perpetration.

1.1 Categories of bullying

Bullying behaviour may be targeted against protected characteristics including disability, gender reassignment and religion/belief. It may also focus on a target's personal appearance, family situation, her choice of friends or personal choices. In all cases, St Catherine's will follow the processes outlined in section 5, below. The categories listed below are not exhaustive.

Homophobic bullying involves the targeting of individuals on the basis of their perceived or actual sexuality or sexual orientation. Homophobic bullying can also include name-calling such as the use of the word "gay" as an insult, gestures, taunts, or 'jokes'. Individuals are commonly singled out for abuse if they do not conform to a stereotypical masculine or feminine gender image.

Examples of *sexual harassment or bullying by gender* include name calling, use of sexual innuendo and unwanted propositioning and commenting on appearance and attractiveness.

Racist bullying is where the bullying behaviour is focused on the target's race, ethnicity or culture. It can include being called racist names or being sent insulting messages or threads; having belongings damaged or being forced to see racist graffiti; personal attacks, include violence or assault; being left out, treated differently, or excluded; assumptions being made based on someone's culture, race or skin colour; being made to feel that one's appearance needs to change; jokes about nationality, culture or colour.

1.2 Methods of bullying

Psychological bullying is when a victim is taunted and called hurtful names. Often the person who engages in this form of behaviour does not consider it to be bullying, but considers it to be 'banter' or 'a joke'. If the victim does not find teasing or taunting funny then it is not. This category can also include the deliberate exclusion of a pupil, influencing others to exclude a pupil, the creation of a hostile environment for another pupil through persistent unkindness or animosity, spreading of rumours regarding a pupil, or persistent negative discussion of a pupil behind her back. Psychological bullying may also include threats of violence or causing another to fear potential physical harm, intimidation or detrimental repercussions.

Physical bullying refers to a pupil being physically assaulted, but can also include damage done to the victim's property, clothing or schoolwork.

Coercive control refers to a pattern of behaviour a perpetrator uses to gain control and power over her target. This may include seeking to lower her target's self-esteem or sense of autonomy through actions such as seeking to influence her choice of friends and/or how she is spending her time. It can also include putting pressure on a pupil to give money or other items, or to carry out tasks/behave in a certain way. It may also involve the exerting of control through emotional means such as by the withdrawal of friendship or through the threat of such withdrawal.

Cyberbullying can be defined as the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else. It can be an extension of face-to-face bullying, with technology providing the bully with another route to harass their target. Particular features of cyberbullying include:

● the invasion of home and personal space, particularly out of school hours;
● the difficulty in controlling the reach of messages circulated electronically;
● the potential size of audience;
● often the perceived anonymity of the perpetrator.

Forms of cyberbullying include:

● threats and intimidation;
● harassment or 'cyberstalking' (the repeated sending of unwanted messages or other forms of online attention);
● vilification/defamation;
● exclusion or rejection;
● impersonation;
● unauthorised publication of private information or images;
● sharing of youth produced sexual images ('nudes' or 'semi-nudes');
● manipulation.

For the purposes of this policy, and for how cases of bullying are handled, the term *perpetrator* will be used to refer to the pupil carrying out the bullying behaviour, and the term *target* will be used to refer to the pupil against whom the behaviour occurs.

2. Understanding why bullying occurs

The reasons why a pupil chooses to engage in bullying behaviour can be wide-ranging and highly complex. As such, it is not possible nor helpful to see bullying as a straightforward disciplinary issue. Frequently the pupil will have significant unmet pastoral needs or vulnerabilities, and without addressing these, the pupil has a reduced chance of improving/altering her behaviour, and the problems are therefore likely to reoccur. It is also important to state that these unmet pastoral needs or vulnerabilities may have safeguarding implications, and how a case of bullying is investigated and managed should have due regard to the school's Safeguarding Policy.

It is often the case that a pupil demonstrating bullying behaviour will be experiencing some kind of social difficulty or insecurity. As a result:

● she may bully as she believes this will gain her the respect of her peers;
● she may bully as a way of gaining a sense of dominance over pupils she perceives as being weaker, in order to address her own vulnerability or sense of inferiority;
● she may try to deflect feelings of low self-esteem by behaviour seeking to reduce the self-esteem of others;
● she may become jealous of those she perceives as having the social standing and sense of security she craves, and therefore targets them out of spite.

It can also be the case that the pupil carrying out the bullying behaviour has herself been bullied, either in school or in her home life, and this kind of behaviour has become normalised to her.

The causes of bullying should not be considered to include the target having deserved or provoked the behaviour. Being the target of bullying behaviour does not infer any weakness or inferiority of character.

3. Methods of preventing bullying

The school actively promotes an atmosphere of kindness, understanding, tolerance and respect - in line with the values in the School Mission - within which bullying is seen as highly abnormal behaviour, and is therefore less able to take root or become widespread. The pupil Code of Conduct is listed in the opening of the Pupil Planner, and pupils receive regular reminders about behaviour expectations. Resilience and self-esteem are regular themes for pastoral discussions in assemblies and Form Times, which emphasise each individual's right to be happy and feel safe, and foster pupils' ability to take action against bullying.

The school raises the awareness of the anti-social nature of bullying through the PSHE programme, school assemblies, the School Council, the Chaplaincy and Wellbeing Committee, the use of Tutor time, in curriculum Schemes of Work as appropriate, and visits by outside agencies. This work also includes considering the role of bystanders, and reminders for pupils that it is important they speak to a member of staff if they think someone is being bullied.
It is recognised that low-level friendship issues can be a precursor to bullying behaviour, and have a similarly negative impact on pupil self-esteem. In September 2021 the School introduced the Girls on Board programme to the Senior School. This is an initiative that gives pupils the tools and

knowledge to navigate their friendships. Where friendship issues are identified, Form Tutors and Pastoral Heads may call a Girls on Board session for the year group or proactively work to facilitate mediation. If necessary/appropriate, Forms or year groups will be given reminders of school expectations regarding their behaviour towards each other, with reference to this policy and the Acceptable Use Policy if relevant.

Awareness and understanding of cyberbullying is raised through discussion in PSHE lessons, pastoral evenings for parents and assemblies and through the ICT Acceptable Use Policy. The school's clear policy regarding mobile phone use and introduction of Yondr pouches during the school day further hinders the capacity for cyberbullying.

The school's wide range of well-known channels through which bullying behaviour can be reported serves as a deterrent, as pupils are aware their conduct is likely to be detected. Similarly, our small class sizes, and our duty system for breaks and lunchtimes, mean staff are well-placed to observe any signs of bullying, which acts as a further deterrent.

As a final deterrent, the school makes pupils aware of the range of sanctions that can be used for bullying behaviour.

4. Detecting and/or identifying cases of bullying

The school is able to receive reports of bullying from pupils, staff or parents.

First and foremost, the school ensures that each individual pupil is aware that they can approach any of the following in order to share concerns or worries:

●   Form Tutor
●   Pastoral Head
●   Chaplain
●   Prefect/other older pupil
●   Independent Listener (School Counsellor)
●   Senior Deputy Head
●   Deputy Head Pastoral
●   Head of Prep
●   Headmistress
●   Any other member of staff

This list is visible on posters in all Form Rooms and in other key rooms around the school. pupils are regularly reminded that it is right to share any worries or concerns, so they feel empowered to speak out when they observe inappropriate behaviour.

Parents are able to contact any member of staff via email or by telephoning Reception who will direct their enquiry to the most appropriate member of staff. In cases of alleged bullying, this is most likely to be the Senior Deputy Head or Head of Prep in the first instance.

The School Reception can be contacted as follows:
      info@stcatherineschool.uk

0208 891 2898

Bullying behaviour can be detected through the observations of staff. Throughout the day, staff are alert to signs of unkindness (e.g. name-calling, exclusion) and any physical aggression. Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, e.g. becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be changes in work patterns, a lack of concentration, or truancy. All staff will be aware of these possibilities and must promptly report any suspicions of bullying to the Pastoral Head/Senior Deputy Head/Head of Prep.

5. Procedures for investigating suspected or alleged bullying

If bullying is suspected or reported, the teacher should make a written record of the incident/allegation, which should then be passed in the first instance to the Senior Deputy Head/Head of Prep, and the Form Tutor and Pastoral Head should be notified. Staff should be mindful of acting on their suspicions or any report promptly. This is to ensure the perpetrator(s) does/do not have the opportunity to intimidate or otherwise coerce their target and/or other witnesses, nor conspire to devise a 'cover story'. Furthermore, staff should remain aware that bullying has safeguarding implications, under the definitions of 'child-on-child abuse' as detailed in the Safeguarding Policy. As such, all incidents/allegations will be addressed with the same level of care and attention as one would a safeguarding concern, including rigorous record-keeping.

The Senior Deputy Head/Head of Prep will agree a strategy for investigation, having notified the Headmistress. This usually involves delegating responsibilities to the Pastoral Head or another suitable staff member. Where there is significant concern, the investigation will be led by the Senior Deputy Head/Head of Prep, planned in consultation with the Head. Where it is suspected that the case may result in a significant suspension and/or expulsion, the Safeguarding Governor will be notified, along with any other governors as deemed appropriate by the Headmistress.

Staff should be wary of the danger of making judgements too quickly, and ensure that both sides of any story are heard.

The precise steps of the investigation will vary depending on the nature of the report, the severity of the allegations and the number of girls involved. The investigation may comprise a range of steps, including but not limited to:

- the girl(s) involved being asked to write individual written accounts of the incident or responses to the allegation;
- the girl(s) involved being interviewed individually or in small groups, with notes taken by a second member of staff;
- the review of any related evidence, such as screen shots, videos, CCTV footage;
- the review of any past records of concerns regarding the girls involved, in case there are previous incidents/observations that may be relevant.

At all stages, the staff leading the investigation will ensure all parties are given the opportunity to air their views, including confidentially if any initial interviews have not been carried out individually. The staff leading the investigation will be highly mindful of protecting all individuals involved, so as to encourage open, honest testimony, and to lessen the chance of retaliation.

Depending on the nature of the case, the staff leading the investigation will decide whether to contact the parents of all or any of the girls involved.

If it is deemed necessary, the Headmistress may choose to suspend the alleged perpetrators while the investigation takes place.

At all stages, written records will be kept. An overview of the investigation will be recorded in the Behaviour Management Spreadsheet and in the Bullying Register (a separate tab within the Behaviour Management Spreadsheet). At the end of the investigation, the Senior Deputy Head or Head of Prep will report her findings to the Headmistress, verbally or in the form of a written summary, depending on the severity of the case.

6. Possible outcomes and sanctions

The Headmistress and Senior Deputy Head/Head of Prep will discuss the findings of their investigation, and agree on whether the allegation is:

- founded (proven);
- false (proven to be untrue);
- unfounded (insufficient evidence to prove or disprove);
- malicious.

Where a case is *false*, for example, where the report/allegation was mistaken, or *unfounded*, the records will be held on file, in case further incidents involving the same girl(s) occur which indicate further attention is warranted. In the immediate time frame, no further action will be taken. Consideration will be given as to whether any information should be shared with other pupils and/or parents. It may also be the case that, while the allegations remain unfounded, steps are taken to support pupils involved . It can also be useful to discuss some aspects of the case with the wider staff or pupil body.

Where an allegation is found to be *malicious,* consideration will be given as to whether those responsible for the report should face some sort of sanction. Consideration will also be given as to why the pupil(s) or other individual chose to make the allegation, and whether a pastoral intervention is required. Records will be kept on all aspects, and parents may be notified. Careful consideration will be given as to the potential impact among the year group and the wider school community. Pastoral interventions may be required to ensure their successful rehabilitation into the school community.

Where a case is *founded*, and it is proven that bullying behaviour has taken place, the Headmistress and Senior Deputy Head/Head of Prep will discuss the possible range of sanctions. In deciding what sanction should be applied, the Headmistress will be mindful of other relevant factors, which include but are not limited to:

- communicating a clear message that bullying behaviour will not be tolerated;
- the precise nature of the bullying behaviour;
- any mitigating/personal factors relevant to the case and the pastoral needs of the perpetrator;

- how/whether the perpetrator can be rehabilitated into the school community;
- the severity of the impact of the bullying on the target(s), including the frequency/duration of the behaviour;
- the perpetrator's character and behaviour record at the school, as appropriate to the case.

The available sanctions are listed below; these may be used individually or in combination. All proven cases of bullying will also be recorded on the school's Bullying Register, which is kept in line with statutory requirements. In all cases the parents of all parties will be informed, unless there are exceptional circumstances (e.g. a safeguarding concern) which are agreed by the Headmistress.

When deciding on an appropriate sanction, full consideration is given to whether the perpetrator has any particular vulnerabilities which mean that reasonable adjustments need to be made to the nature of the sanction and how this is communicated to the perpetrator.

Warning
Appropriate in lower level, and/or first offence cases of minor bullying, a firm verbal warning will be issued by a member of staff, most likely the Senior Deputy Head/Head of Prep.

Mediation
Appropriate in lower level cases of bullying, or particularly when there has been misunderstanding, a carefully facilitated conversation by a member of the Pastoral Team (which includes the Independent Listener) may be conducted between the pupils involved. This could also include other pupils within the Form/year group who are identified by the Pastoral Team as having the capacity to help ensure positive relations going forward. Mediation may involve the perpetrator apologising for their past behaviour, and could also include agreed ground rules/boundaries for ongoing interaction.

Restorative justice
The perpetrator is asked to undertake a task to demonstrate contrition for their actions. This will most commonly involve writing a letter of apology to their target(s) and any other relevant parties, taking responsibility for their actions, acknowledging the impact on their target(s) and other members of the community, and giving a clear undertaking that it will not happen again.

Detention (after-school or extended after-school)
The perpetrator will be asked to attend a school detention, during which they will be given tasks that require them to reflect on their behaviour and the impact it has had on others.

Suspension
Suspensions may be given by the Headmistress for bullying. Refer to the Discipline and Exclusion Policy for further detail. In some instances, a pupil may be internally suspended (removed from lessons, but not the site).

Expulsion

A decision to expel a pupil will be taken as a last resort following a single serious offence and/or in cases of repeated bullying; sanctions may also be given to pupils involved as *bystanders* in incidents of bullying. Refer to the Discipline and Exclusion Policy for further detail.

7. Expected follow up after a case of bullying

All pupils involved (target, bystanders, perpetrator(s) will be given appropriate, individualised pastoral support, including the opportunity to see the Independent Listener. Reviews of their ongoing progress will be conducted by their Form Tutor, Pastoral Head and/or Senior Deputy Head/Head of Prep, in case of ongoing need. However, sensitivity will also be given to each pupil's right to move on from the incident, and re-establish their identity and reputation within the community.

Work may be done with the wider cohort to ensure the perpetrator is given an opportunity to move on from their mistake and have the opportunity to return to the community and progress successfully through their school career. This is of importance where the perpetrator has a particular vulnerability. For the target, efforts may be made to identify and encourage pupils who are well-placed to offer friendship and support.

In all cases of bullying, the Senior Deputy Head may choose to review the incident with other staff to identify whether there are any learning points that should inform future anti-bullying strategy and policy. Learning points following a review are recorded in the Behaviour Management Spreadsheet. Furthermore, the bullying Register will be reviewed on a termly basis to ascertain any patterns or trends, the findings of which will inform pastoral strategy within the school. Findings in relation to all review work will be discussed with the Safeguarding Governor, and reported to the board of governors at the next appropriate juncture, usually the Senior Deputy Head/Head of Prep's report to the termly Education Committee Meeting.

Related documents and policies
Behaviour Management Policy
Discipline & Exclusions Policy
Use of the Computer System and Internet Access, including Acceptable Use Policy
Safeguarding Policy
KCSIE statutory guidance
DfE Preventing & Tackling Bullying 2017

Last reviewed: **October 2023**
Next review: **October 2024**