

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Person responsible: Deputy Head (Pastoral)
Reviewed: October 2023

As a Cathedral School with an emphasis on community, The King's School is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of its pupils so that they can learn and develop in the house, classroom and in all co-curricular areas in a relaxed and secure environment. Any attempt to interfere with this safe environment will be treated most seriously. An atmosphere is encouraged in which all pupils should feel that they are able to tell a member of staff or a senior pupil and know that the incident will be promptly and effectively investigated.

The King's School recognises that bullying can occur between pupils, between members of staff, and between staff and pupils.

What is bullying?

Bullying is an intentional abuse of power by an individual or group, usually repeated over time. In bullying there is a conscious desire to hurt, to threaten or to frighten. Bullying takes many forms:

- **Physical:** pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching and any use of violence.
- **Verbal:** name-calling, sarcasm, teasing, insulting, and spreading rumours.
- **Emotional:** exclusion, tormenting, e.g. hiding books or belongings, threatening gestures, racial taunts, unfriendliness, graffiti and gestures.
- **Sexual:** unwanted physical contact or abusive comments.
- **Cyberbullying:** inappropriate text messaging and emailing, sending offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet (usually through social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and so on).

Bullying can seriously damage a young person's confidence and sense of self-worth, and they will often feel that they are at fault in some way. It can lead to prolonged emotional and psychological damage for an individual.

The school recognises that bullying may occur at any time and in any area of the school or when pupils are beyond the school bounds.

Pupils are bullied for a variety of reasons. Specific types of bullying include:

- Bullying related to race, religion or culture
- Bullying related to SEN or disabilities
- Bullying related to appearance
- Bullying related to lack of prowess in sport, for example
- Sexist or sexual, including homophobic bullying
- Bullying related to any other of the protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act of 2010

The Deputy Head (Pastoral), in consultation in serious cases with the Senior Deputy Head, will gauge in a professional way the level of suffering experienced by the pupil and will decide with the Safeguarding Co-Ordinator when a safeguarding threshold has been reached. There are criminal laws related to harassment and threatening behaviour which can be implemented in relation to occasions of bullying. Equally, it is possible that the bullying raises a safeguarding concern and the Deputy Head (Pastoral), as DSL, will decide whether to implement the measures outlined in the

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy alongside the other measures taken outlined here.

Strategies for the prevention of bullying

The King's School aims to provide:

- An open, positive, friendly, and caring atmosphere which helps to build positive self-images among pupils and fosters appropriate behaviour in all areas.
- The encouragement of positive role models across the school community.
- A structured Life Matters (PSHE) programme within the curriculum which aims at developing personal and inter-personal skills as well as dealing specifically with the issue of bullying.
- Any form of harassment or bullying can be directly reported using the QR codes displayed around school and on the back of the termly calendar, and this report will go directly to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator.
- A weekly period set aside for contact time with personal tutors and regular House meetings where issues, including bullying, can be addressed.
- Pupil guidelines, including a complaints procedure.
- A peer listening scheme.
- Reassurance that all senior pupils with some responsibility for younger pupils receive regular support from House staff.
- The Deputy Head (Pastoral) sends links to parents when new cyberbullying publications are issued, such as the Vodafone Guide for Parents.
- The Deputy Head (Pastoral) keeps a stock of booklets 'Preventing and dealing with bullying: 101 tips for parents', these are available to parents and the houses all have stocks of these as well.
- The Wellbeing Hub provides students, staff and parents with strategies and support for the prevention of bullying.

Strategies for monitoring

Bullying will be monitored through:

- Pupils' questionnaires conducted in Life Matters lessons at the end of the year.
- Staff vigilance, both within and outside of the classroom, and good staff/pupil relationships.
- Vigilance by all, especially the monitors within houses.
- Swift response to individual incidents of bullying and reporting to relevant staff.
- Discussion at meetings of Housemasters and Housemistresses.
- Open communication with parents and guardians.
- Reporting via the QR code.
- Staff reporting through our internal use electronic monitoring system, CPOMS.

Procedures

- Incidents that could appear to involve bullying should be reported to the relevant Housemaster or Housemistress at the earliest opportunity, if these reports are from school staff this should be through CPOMS entries.

- The appropriate member of staff will interview the relevant people; following this investigation, incidents that are found to have involved bullying will be recorded in writing and details passed to the Senior Deputy Head and the Deputy Head (Pastoral) via CPOMS.
- Any pupil who is being bullied will be given the support and protection they need as well as assistance to develop positive coping strategies and self-assertion.
- Pupils who are bullying will also be given support and assistance to enable them to change their pattern of behaviour.
- It will be emphasised that any bullying behaviour must cease immediately.
- In serious cases of bullying, the parents of both parties will be informed of what has happened and how it has been dealt with.
- Where appropriate, colleagues will be informed and urged to be vigilant.
- If the bullying behaviour continues and counselling of all involved has not worked, then appropriate sanctions, determined by the Head (or in their absence the Senior Deputy Head) in consultation with the relevant Housemaster or Housemistress, will follow. In persistent and/or serious cases, suspension or expulsion will be considered. (See Behaviour and Sanctions Policy).
- In cases of staff to pupil bullying the Safeguarding Policy will be followed.
- In cases of staff-to-staff bullying the Grievance Procedure detailed in the Annexe to the Contract of Service for Assistant Teachers should be followed.
- Records of bullying will be regularly reviewed by members of SLT/SMT.

Cyberbullying

"Cyberbullying involves 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." Bill Belsey www.cyberbullying.org

Cyberbullying can involve social networking sites, such as X (Twitter), Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, WhatsApp, Facebook, emails and mobile phones used for SMS messages and as cameras.

In addition to the preventative measures described above, the school:

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its IT Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) for the safe use of the internet. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our Safeguarding team and IT Department monitor pupils' use as appropriate.
- May impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet.
- Issues all pupils with their own personal Microsoft account and school email address.
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying in Digital Curriculum (DC) and Life Matters lessons which covers issues such as blocking, removing contacts from 'buddy lists' and sharing personal data.
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe and secure.