



Counter Bullying Policy and Strategy

This document applies to all parts of The Pilgrims' School,
including parents and pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Responsibility of: Deputy Head Pupil Development
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Counter Bullying Policy and Strategy

This policy does not sit in isolation and should be read in conjunction with other pastoral policies, most particularly the 'Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy', the 'Behaviour, Discipline and Exclusions Policy' and the 'Supervision Policy'. It is written with reference to the following non-statutory guidance from the DfE: ***Preventing and Tackling Bullying (2017) and Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff (2024)***

The Pilgrims' School aims to be a caring community where individual and collective responsibilities are paramount. We seek to treat all pupils and staff treated fairly, with due regard for protected characteristics such as race, ethnic origin, nationality, sex, disability, age, religion, sexual orientation, marital/parental status, political belief and social/economic group. Bullying undermines these aims and will not be tolerated. Moreover, the School puts in place education and systems that will spot early signs and as part of early help, to prevent issues from escalating. We recognise that any bullying between pupils presents particular challenges where the pupils are boarders and do not go home as often as others might.

It is everyone's responsibility to prevent bullying from happening and with this in mind this Counter Bullying Policy lays down certain guidelines.

Principles

In dealing with bullying, the School will lead with the principles of **education** and **restoration**. Both promote emotional literacy and reduce the likelihood of repetition, whilst helping boys towards adult life. Ensuring a strong focus upon the victim and their experience, whilst also supporting the bully in order to promote a change in their behaviour, is key.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is any repeated behaviour - verbal, psychological, electronic, social or physical - which intentionally hurts another individual physically or emotionally and prevents them from living at ease with themselves or other members of the School. Bullying often involves an imbalance of power, which could for example be social, emotional or physical. It can involve prejudice on the grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, sexual orientation, special educational needs and disability or because a child is adopted or is a carer.

For example it can be:-

- Name calling.
- Making fun of someone in an unpleasant way.
- Sexual misconduct, which includes sexist language and sexual harassment.
- Stealing, breaking or hiding someone's possessions and/or repeatedly using someone else's possessions without their consent
- Sending inappropriate material or messages electronically. For more information about this, refer to the E-Safety Policy.
- Pushing or hitting someone.

- Frightening someone into doing things they do not want to do (coercion).
- Intimidation to prevent someone doing something they want.
- Excluding another from information or social interactions

Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time. It can be carried out by an individual or by a group, or by an individual at a particular instant that forms part of an ongoing group dynamic.

It is not bullying, for example, when:

- Two people have the occasional dispute
- Staff administer accepted sanctions, fairly, openly and appropriately

Bullying can occur between:

- Boy(s) and boy(s) (this is sometimes referred to as child-on-child abuse if there is a risk of significant harm and can also happen online)
- Staff and staff (See Staff Code of Conduct document and Whistleblowing Policy.)
- Staff and boy

Bullying behaviour is demeaning and frightening and can cause psychological damage and any of the consequences that can happen thereafter.

Strategy

General aim of the school

The aim of the school is to ensure that everyone feels responsible for combating the root causes of bullying and understands that it is unacceptable in all forms.

- The school operates a visible and proactive approach towards the prevention of bullying with a number of initiatives used to this effect.
- Victims are protected and supported and those engaged in bullying, are encouraged to change their attitudes and beliefs about bullying, as well as their actual behaviour.
- In addition to acting against incidents which occur within the School, the School reserves the right to take action against bullying perpetrated outside the school which spills over into the school. This is particularly true of cyber bullying.

Parents

If a parent believes that their son is or may be being bullied, they should immediately contact his form tutor, the Head of Section or the Deputy Head Pupil Development, as may seem appropriate to the level of concern.

What do the staff and boys do to create a culture in which it is very hard for bullying to exist?

General

- All members of staff are active in supporting and promoting the school's Counter Bullying Policy, as stated above.
- The standard of behaviour and the School's values, culture and expectations are reinforced constantly during assemblies, tutor times and PSHE lessons. This specifically involves discussing how we should live together and consideration for each other's wellbeing.
- We reinforce the idea that speaking up early will help to prevent any bullying before it occurs.
- The School Supervision Policy makes clear that effective supervision involves reducing the risk of bullying by being aware of the times and places where it is most likely.
- Pupils are encouraged to report bullying through any part of the School's pastoral care model / any member of staff they feel most comfortable with. Pupil Voice boxes can also be used.
- A structured PSHE programme develops personal and inter-personal skills and deals specifically with various kinds of bullying.
- The School ensures appropriate internet security, filtering and IT education.

Rewards

- The School's rewards system is used to promote positive behaviour and the Schools values, thus a culture that counters the existence of bullying
- In Spring Term 2026, a system of rewarding boys who have epitomised the values (Heart, Excellence, Joy, Integrity, Respect) is to be trialled, linked to the Set system.

Involving Parents

- The aim of the School is to have 'open conversations' embedded throughout a boy's time at Pilgrims'. Identifying and tackling all forms of behaviour relies on the approach being relational, clear, reflective and supportive.
- Parental involvement is encouraged through weekly publications of **The Pilgrims' Way**, a website-based newsletter aimed at giving parents an insight into what goes on after they have dropped their sons off at school, and information about activities and events taking place.
- More formal parental involvement is fostered through the system of regular **parents' meetings** with teachers and open access is encouraged between parents and their son's teacher or tutor. It is hoped that through a strong link between staff, boys and parents any behaviour that could lead to bullying will be quickly discouraged and acted upon.
- **Wellbeing Matters presentations** are another means of parental engagement around many important aspects of pastoral care.

Promoting Cross-Year group relations

Other systems that promote cross-year group relations also play an important part in creating a pupil culture where it is very hard for bullying to exist:

- Middle Prep and Upper Prep tutor groups are banded in pairs of Year groups;
- **An uncle and nephew system** exists between boys in Year 8 and new boys in Year 3 and 4. This gives these younger boys the opportunity to get to know an older boy so that the older boys are perceived as less formidable by the younger ones and they have some peer support during their early weeks at Pilgrims' and hopefully beyond;
- The Year 2 and 3 boys become **cousins** within our buddy system, during the Summer Term as part of our transition between the Pre-Prep and the Lower Prep section. This helps to promote positive relationships across the age groups at Pilgrims'.
- The Year 8 boys enjoy the responsibility of keeping an eye on the new boys around the school and imparting various tips learnt over many years at the school. **Prefects**, in particular, are charged with maintaining a caring eye.

Pupil Voice

If we expect high standards of behaviour from the boys, it is vital that they feel involved and valued in the running of their school. Pupil voice opportunities pertinent to countering bullying include:

- the **School Council**;
- a **suggestions box** in the boys' hall;
- a **worry box** in the Briggs Library;
- **boarding boxes** in each boarding house;

[Into these boxes boys may drop concerns, ideas and observations. Each suggestion is given to the appropriate member of staff who then takes up the matter orally or more formally.]

- a weekly **Prefects meeting** with the Headmaster and Second Master which includes discussion of possible issues or concerns they have seen around school;
- Online surveys using Smoothwall Pulse and STEER.

Monitoring

Monitoring in School is achieved through:

- Staff vigilance and professional curiosity (as well as good pupil/staff and good pupil/tutor relationships).
- Records on CPOMS and their analysis
- Weekly Section meetings and Pastoral Care Team meetings at which, if necessary, any bullies or pupils at risk are discussed.
- PSHEe discussions.
- Appropriate internet monitoring and filtering
- Awareness raising and surveys amongst pupils and staff.
- The Deputy Head Pupil Development, DSL and Headmaster regularly
 - report to the Pilgrims' Committee (and Governing Body as appropriate) about bullying,
 - monitor bullying records, and
 - update and amend relevant policies and procedures as required.

What happens when bullying occurs?

The School will react firmly and promptly where bullying is identified. There is a range of follow-up steps available to the staff depending on the situation. Some of these steps include:-

- Discussion with staff and pupil(s).
- Mediation between the perpetrator and victim.
- Imposition of sanctions and referral to senior staff.
- Communication with parents.
- All incidents are recorded on CPOMS.

Care and consideration will be given as to whether the action taken in the first instance will include a sanction. In all cases, a bully will be asked to talk about their behaviour and encouraged to find ways to change it. It may sometimes be the case that the bully genuinely has not recognised the distress caused to the victim by their behaviour.

If those responsible for the bullying behaviour repeat it, sanctions will be applied. Ultimately a bully who will not change their behaviour may have to leave the School.

Serious incidents, such as a serious physical assault, will be referred by the Designated Safeguarding Lead to Hampshire Children's Services. (See child-on-child abuse in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.)

After an incident has been managed, the situation will be monitored carefully by staff to prevent it recurring. Everyone involved has responsibility for helping the bully to change their behaviour. In addition, the victim is likely to need support with their feelings and in understanding how things can move forwards positively.

What can all staff members do?

In some cases victims of bullying do not want anyone else to know what is happening, because they:

- do not want to tell tales;
- do not want the bully to be punished;
- are afraid of what the bully will do;
- have become demoralised and feel they do not deserve any better.

For these reasons we must:

- Encourage all pupils to break the silence about bullying behaviour. Emphasise that bystanders are encouraging and endorsing bullying behaviour.
- Respond immediately, swiftly and unambiguously to individual incidents of bullying and inform relevant colleagues who will provide support, investigate and mediate/invoke the disciplinary process as appropriate.
- Use the pastoral network to raise awareness and identify ways of reducing the risk of bullying at times and in places where it is most likely.

- Support and protect children who are being bullied and help them develop positive strategies and assertion. They need a balance between protection and empowerment. Keep a special watch on those involved.
- Help bullies to change their behaviour.
- Inform parents at an early stage.
- Record incidents using CPOMS.

Appendix 1

With reference to the *Online Safety Act (2023)*, *Cyberbullying: advice for headteachers and school staff (2014)*, and *Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff (2024)*

Counter Cyber Bullying Policy

This policy must be read in conjunction with the School's Counter Bullying Policy, E-Safety Policy and Staff Code of Conduct (Employees) and Pupil IT Code of Conduct.

Whilst the Pilgrims' School embraces the advantages of modern technology in terms of the educational benefits it brings, the school is mindful of the potential for bullying to occur. The School has a 'no personal devices' policy for pupils. Only boarders may have such personal devices on site and these are kept securely by boarding staff until specifically scheduled and supervised 'device time' in boarding.

Although the School has a 'no personal devices' policy, it also recognises a duty to address bullying (including cyber bullying) that occurs out of school on the grounds of two core points:

- central to the school's Counter Bullying Policy is the belief that, 'all pupils have a right not to be bullied' and that 'bullying is always unacceptable';
- headteachers in the maintained sector have the legal power to make sure pupils behave outside of school, which includes bullying that happens anywhere off the school premises. In keeping, we will address bullying that occurs outside of school when there is proof. This may include evidence of cyber bullying on devices and/or screenshots thereof.

Definition

Cyber bullying is the use of IT, particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else. It can be an extension of face-to-face bullying but differs in several significant ways:

- a more pervasive intrusion into personal space;
- the potential for anonymity on the part of the bully;
- the potential for the bully to play to a larger audience;
- the difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages.

Cyber bullying takes different forms: threats and intimidation, harassment or 'cyber-stalking' (e.g. repeatedly sending unwanted texts or instant messages), vilification/defamation, exclusion/peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorised publication of private information/images and manipulation. Sexual misconduct can be particularly destructive when perpetrated online through, for example, the unwanted sharing of images, and can also involve the sharing of inappropriate jokes and messages. This should never be taken as "banter" or just as a part of growing up. Pupils are educated on the subject of cyber bullying via the PHSEe programme.

Legal issues

Cyber bullying is often criminal in character. The law applies to cyberspace. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information in any media including internet sites.

Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by public means of a public electronic communications network, a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or one of an indecent, obscene or menacing character.

Cyber bullying can also be a criminal offence under these laws:

- The Malicious Communications Act 1988
- The Public Order Act 1986
- The Defamation Acts of 1952 and 1996
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997

School commitments

The School educates its pupils both in the proper use of technology and about serious consequences of cyber bullying through PSHE and in IT lessons and will continue to inform and educate its pupil body in these fast changing areas. It also works to build resilience in its pupils to protect themselves and their peers through education and information.

The school trains its staff to be alert to online safety and to respond effectively to reports of cyber bullying or harassment.

The school endeavours to block access to inappropriate web sites and uses firewalls, anti-virus protection and filtering systems in order to alert the school to safeguarding issues.

The school informs parents of its policy on procedures and offers advice about the use of computers by pupils at home.

School statement

Whilst education and guidance remain at the heart of what we do, the school reserves the right to take action against those who take part in cyber bullying.

All bullying is damaging but cyber bullying and harassment can be invasive of privacy at all times.

These acts may also be criminal acts. (See above.)

The School supports victims and, when necessary, will work with the Police to detect those involved in criminal acts

The School will use, as appropriate, the full range of sanctions to correct, punish or remove pupils who bully fellow pupils or harass staff in this way, either in or out of school.

The School will use its power of confiscation where necessary to prevent pupils from committing crimes or misusing equipment.

All members of the school community are aware they must bring to the attention of senior staff any example of cyber bullying or harassment that they know about or suspect.

Youth Produced Sexual Imagery (Sexting)

Creating and sharing sexual photos and videos of under-18s is illegal. Staff should refer to the DSL immediately any incident in which a pupil under the age of 18:

- creates and shares nudes and semi-nudes of themselves with a peer under the age of 18;
- shares nudes and semi-nudes created by another person under the age of 18 with another person; or
- is in possession of nudes and semi-nudes created by another person under the age of 18.

Staff should not view youth produced sexual imagery unless there is good and clear reason to do so.

Along with our own Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures, the school will follow the advice given in *Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people' 2024* (UK Council for Child Internet Safety, UKCCIS), which states:

- The DSL will hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff and subsequent interviews with the young people involved (if appropriate).
- Parents will be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the young person at risk of harm.
- If there is a concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral should be made to local authority children's social care and/or the police immediately.

The decision not to involve the police or local authority children's social care would be made in cases when the DSL is confident that they have enough information to assess the risks to pupils involved and the risks can be managed within the school's pastoral and disciplinary frameworks and, if appropriate, local network of support, including Winchester College. An example might be where the conduct was experimental and there is no evidence of abusive or aggravating elements.

If managed internally, pupils will be instructed to delete the imagery and to confirm that they have done so on all devices, online storage or social media sites within an agreed timeframe. Failure to do so is a criminal offence and the matter will be referred to the police.

The sharing of nudes and semi-nudes of under 18s by adults is illegal and should always be reported to the police.

Online safety at home

Several sites offer helpful advice to parents, particularly with respect to how they can best monitor their child's use of the computer at home. Important and useful information can be found on the following sites:

[Appropriate Filtering - UK Safer Internet Centre](#)

[Appropriate Monitoring - UK Safer Internet Centre](#)

www.childnet.com

<https://www.ceopeducation.co.uk/>

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

www.disrespectnobody.co.uk

www.saferinternet.org.uk

www.internetmatters.org

www.educateagainsthate.com

<https://parentzone.org.uk/>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

www.stopcyberbullying.org

Pupil IT Code of Conduct

This is displayed prominently in IT classrooms and the **Code of Conduct** is explained and discussed with pupils in tutorials, PSHEe classes and Digital Learning classes.

Information sharing

The school recognises the fundamental importance of information sharing in protecting children from harm and promoting children's wellbeing.

The importance of information sharing between agencies is highlighted in a number of serious case reviews which demonstrate that where information is not shared, concerning patterns of behaviour are often missed and children often do not receive the support they need.

The school shares information in accordance with the **Data Protection Act 1998**, the guidance set out in **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)**, **Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)**, **Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (May, 2024)**, **ICO Guidance – A 10-step Guide to Sharing Information to Safeguard Children (2025)** and the **Data Use & Access Act (2025)**