SENIOR SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Please also refer to the Positive Behaviour Code and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our School. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a TELLING school. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

Bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Any member of the Our Lady’s Abingdon (OLA) community, pupil, employee or volunteer has the right to learn and work without fear of being bullied. Through this policy, OLA aims to prevent bullying from occurring. Its objectives are to ensure that all members of the community:

• Feel safe from bullying
• Recognise bullying behaviour
• Understand and support the School’s stance against bullying
• Know how to report incidents of bullying
• Contribute to informing and, where possible, evaluating this policy.

1.0 PRINCIPLES

1.1 As in any community, there is always a possibility that some form of bullying may occur. The School does its utmost to encourage an ethos where bullying is acknowledged as totally wrong and the reporting of bullying is viewed as the correct and responsible action to take. No individual should have to suffer any form of intimidation, and bullying has no place at OLA.

1.2 OLA acknowledges its responsibility to protect all individuals in the School and to act promptly if any cases of bullying are discovered.

2.0 DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. We recognise the seriousness of bullying in causing psychological damage and even suicide (although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour).

2.1 The School views bullying as an act of unkindness by one or more students against another individual or group of students and as deliberately hurtful behaviour involving unequal power relationships, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being
bullied to defend themselves. Bullying may be sexual, about race, a disability, religious affiliation or practice, culture or sexual orientation. It can take many forms, but includes harassment, physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft), verbal (e.g. racist remarks, homophobic language), indirect (e.g. spreading rumours, excluding someone from social groups) or cyber bullying (e.g. use of internet sites, internet messaging, sending of photographs, email or text).

2.2 Signs of Bullying - Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour for example becoming shy or nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be changes to work patterns, a lack of concentration or truancy. This is not an exhaustive list and students, staff and parents should be alert to any signs that might indicate that bullying is taking place.

3.0 FEATURES OF BULLYING

3.1 Nature: this can be physical and/or psychological. Verbal bullying is the most common form of bullying and can escalate into violence. This can be a defensive or retaliatory reaction by the victim. It can, of course, result if the name-calling is seen to have little or no effect on the part of the aggressor.

- Verbal bullying can be directed at the victim personally or can be directed at their relations or the group whom they may be regarded as representing (this is often more provoking and injurious). Racist, religious and sexual taunts all come under this category.
- Physical violence and/or threatening behaviour. Often the threat of violence, which may never materialise, is more intimidating because it is less tangible and overt. It is also less difficult to attribute.
- Isolation / Rejection: deliberately being ostracised from various groups is designed to cause distress and demoralise the victim.
- Indirect or Insidious behaviour: this covers a wide variety of methods, many in themselves ingenious, such as malicious rumour, the taking, destroying or hiding of possessions. More serious and extreme examples of this type of bullying include anonymous telephone calls, hate mail, and the like.

3.2 Intensity: this can range from “play-fighting” during break or lunchtime to vicious assault in physical terms and from the calling of nicknames to repeated nuisance telephone calls in psychological terms. It is the intent of the bully and the effect on the victim, which in all cases determines what, constitutes bullying.

3.3 Duration: bullying can be a once only incident where there is an obvious discrepancy between the ages, power, strength of the parties concerned, occasional, intermittent, short-lived, or it can be regular, repeated and long-standing.

3.4 Intention: bullying is premeditated and calculated to injure (whether psychologically or physically) rather than thoughtless or accidental. Many bullies will attempt to excuse their actions by denying that this was the intention. In the minority of cases this lack of understanding of the outcome of their actions and therefore what constitutes bullying remains an excuse.

3.5 Number: bullying may be carried out by one student or by a group.
3.6 **Motivation:** with bullies the motive is mainly to achieve power over another individual in an attempt to promote their own personal image. It may also be to secure affiliation to a group regarded as having more profile within a year group than all others have. A victim may also be a scapegoat as part of preserving group solidarity.

3.7 **Location:** given its nature bullying can take place in a variety of locations, hence the need to be vigilant at all times. In any school, there are times and places which increase the potential of bullies to operate.

4.0 **TYPES OF BULLYING**

4.1 **Racist** – In the 1999 MacPherson Report, racist bullying was defined as ‘any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person’. More recently the law on racial discrimination defines it as ‘Unwanted conduct with the purpose of violating dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment’.

Such behaviour is characterized by:
- Verbal abuse by name-calling, racist jokes and offensive mimicry
- Physical threats or attacks
- Wearing of provocative badges or insignia
- Bringing racist leaflets, comics or magazines
- Inciting others to behave in a racist way
- Racist graffiti or other written insults — even against food, music, dress or customs
- Refusing to cooperate in work or in play

4.1 **Sexual** – Sexual bullying involves both genders. Such behaviour is characterized by:
- Abusive name-calling
- Looks and comments about appearance, attractiveness, emerging puberty
- Inappropriate and uninvited touching
- Sexual innuendoes and propositions
- Pornographic material, graffiti with sexual content
- In its most extreme form, sexual assault or rape

4.3 **Sexist** – This is the targeting of an individual for being perceived as a member of a particular gender. Such behaviour is characterized by:
- Abusive name calling
- Offensive mimicry
- Inappropriate or uninvited physical contact
- Physical violence or threatening behaviour
- Display of pornographic material
- Wearing of provocative badges or insignia
- Sexual innuendo
- Inciting others to behave in a sexist manner
- Mockery of a person’s demeanour or manner of speaking

4.4 **Homophobic** – Homophobic bullying is the result of the use of language, gesture or media to describe someone who is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered in all to injure them.

Such behaviour is characterized by:
- Abusive name calling
- Social exclusion
• Mockery of a person’s contribution in class or to the School
  □ Inciting others to act in an homophobic manner
  □ Refusing to cooperate in work or in recreation
  □ Circulation of improper material

4.5 **Cyber Bullying** – Cyber bullying is an aggressive intentional act carried out by an individual or group, using electronic media, repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot defend him or herself. Seven categories of cyber bullying have been identified:
  □ Text messaging
  □ Sending pictures or video clips
  □ Phone calling
  □ Email messaging
  □ Chat room messaging
  □ Instant messaging
  □ Website bullying including the use of defamatory blogs, personal websites, personal space and on-line personal polling sites

4.6 **Special Educational Needs and Disability** – Students with special educational needs or disabilities may not be able to articulate experiences as well as other children. However, they are often at greater risk of being bullied, both directly and indirectly, and usually about their specific difficulties or disability.

4.7 **Religious** – the term religious bullying refers to a range of hurtful behaviour, both physical and psychological, that makes a person feel unwelcome, marginalised, excluded, powerless or worthless because of their faith community. Such behaviour is characterized by:
  □ when people are stereotyped by their religion
  □ when a person is rejected or excluded from a group because of their religion

4.8 **Cultural bullying** is something someone does or says that offends someone else in connection with their culture. Such behaviour is characterized by:
  □ when a person is teased or called names because of their culture or the colour of their skin, their religion, the country they come from, their language and the way they talk, the food they eat, clothes they wear or their background
  • when people make fun of a person’s family
  □ when a person is treated unfairly because of their way of life.

Advice and guidance to counter such bullying and to respond to it is updated in the Students’ Handbook and Planner each year.

These forms of bullying, regardless of whether or not they take place within school time, have a direct impact on the health and happiness of the intended victim. In the event that such bullying emanates from an individual or group within the school, the perpetrators will be subject to disciplinary action.

5.0 **RAISING AWARENESS OF BULLYING**
The School intends to make pupils aware that bullying is not an inevitable part of school life. This is achieved by:
  • Educating pupils to an awareness of what bullying is in its range and depth through induction and orientation programmes, the opportunities which arise in the curriculum,
the PSHE Programme, through assemblies, the homework diary and the general ethos of the School etc.

- Indicating how they as pupils are to respond to it as victims and as members of a community which stands against bullying.
- Providing them with the support system to which they can turn in cases of bullying.
- Supporting any pupil who is the victim of bullying.
- Allowing pupils to feel confident that the bullying will be acted upon swiftly to curtail the problem.
- Raising staff awareness of the nature, range and response to be made to bullying and its victims.
- Raising the awareness of the senior pupils and Prefects to the nature, range and response to be made to incidents of bullying and its victims.
- Raising the awareness of parents to the serious commitment of the School to act on bullying issues and thus gain their confidence in dealing with the issues when they materialise.

### 6.0 PUPILS’ RESPONSE TO BULLYING

#### 6.1
A pupil who is being bullied should always tell someone. Pupils are advised that bullying will rarely go away of its own accord; they are reassured that the situation will not be made worse by reporting it and are commended for taking positive action in telling a teacher.

#### 6.2
The guidelines given to pupils are as follows:

- be proud of who you are; it is good to be individual
- tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied, bullying is wrong
- try not to show that you are upset; it is hard, but a bully often thrives on someone’s fear
- be assertive; walk away confidently and go straight to a member of staff or Prefect
- if you suspect that you may be threatened, stay with a group of people
- do not fight back - this may make things worse.

#### 6.3
If a pupil knows that someone else is being bullied, they are expected to take some action. Doing nothing may be interpreted as being on the side of the bully and could make the victim feel even more unhappy and isolated. Appropriate action might include some of the following:

- speaking out at the time
- speaking sympathetically to the victim at a suitable moment and offering support
- telling a teacher what has been seen or heard.

### 7.0 GUIDANCE TO STAFF

- Make the individual (pupil/parent) feel at ease and supported.
- Give them time to explain the situation. Listen carefully.
- Make notes on the nature of the incident on the ‘Record of Bullying’ form. Be sure to repeat detail or question specifics in order to gain a full knowledge of the incident. Dates, times and nature of the incidents are significant details to be ascertained. Copies of all records of bullying must be passed on to the Principal to be filed in a separate register of incidents of bullying.
• Establish whether there are other pupils who can corroborate the account given and who may be able to act as witnesses. Establish if there may have been any provocation on the part of the victim.
• Do not make any immediate judgement. Do not offer an opinion on either the detail or the individuals who may be named as being the bullies.
• The professional response must come only after impartial investigation of the incident.
• Make it clear that the problem will be treated seriously; reassure the individual that you will investigate the incident as a matter of urgency.
• Indicate some time-scale by which you will make the next contact with the individual
• In response to issues raised by parents, if you have not made the progress you had hoped or the investigation is more complex that you had initially presumed for instance, make telephone contact and update them on the position. You can then establish when you will next contact them. Contact with pupils is obviously much easier.
• Pass all information, on the same day, to the Year Tutor, who will inform the Designated Safeguarding Leads (N Hathaway, Senior School; B O’Neill, Junior School, V Atkinson, EYFS). The Year Tutor will liaise with parents and keep them informed of actions being taken and the eventual resolution of the incident.

8.0 PARENTS’/GUARDIANS’ RESPONSE TO BULLYING
Parents/guardians can help by:
• Regularly encouraging their son or daughter to talk about their day and asking questions as appropriate.
• Being sensitive to any unusual behaviour in their son or daughter such as a reluctance to attend school, feeling ill regularly, or not completing work to their normal standard.
• Informing their son or daughter’s Form Teacher or Year Tutor immediately if they feel their son/daughter may be a victim of bullying. We want to know as soon as possible, even if it does turn out to be a false alarm.
• Giving reassurance to their son or daughter if they are being bullied e.g. by telling them that they are not in the wrong and encouraging them to ask for help.
• Reminding their son/daughter of the School policy concerning bullying and the support they will receive from staff.

9.0 THE SCHOOL’S RESPONSE TO BULLYING
9.1 OLA addresses the issue of bullying mainly via PSHE, but also in RS and sometimes other lessons, form registration time and occasionally in assemblies.
9.2 In PSHE, it will:
• discuss aspects of bullying and the appropriate ways to deal with threatening behaviour
• encourage pupils to discuss how they relate to other people and how they can form positive attitudes towards others
• review the nature of friendship.
9.3 If bullying is suspected a member of staff will talk with some or all of the following:
• the suspected victim
• the suspected bully
• any witnesses.

9.4 The victim is supported in one or more of the following ways; by:
• Offering them an immediate opportunity to talk further about the experience with an appropriate person - Form Teacher, Year Tutor, Counsellor or another teacher if they choose.
• Involving them in any decisions about the action to be taken, giving serious consideration to their view and opinions, so that they feel comfortable and in control.
• Informing their parents/guardians and involving them fully in the resolution of the situation.
• Helping to rebuild confidence, by giving reassurance and praising the courage shown.
• Arranging for support to be given in situations where they feel it is needed.
• Taking one or more of the disciplinary procedures described in 9.6 to prevent further bullying.

9.5 The bully is supported in one or more of the following ways; by:
• Listening and talking to them to discover the reason(s) for the incident(s).
• Informing their parents/guardians and involving them fully in the resolution of the situation.
• Offering counselling to the bully if appropriate and continuing to support them as necessary to prevent further bullying.

9.6 It is very difficult to list appropriate sanctions because every case of bullying is different and sanctions will be the subject of discussion in each case. The School will respond to incidents of bullying behaviour in a proportionate way – the more serious the cause for concern the more serious the response. When sanctions are felt to be necessary they will be applied consistently and fairly. Those sanctions available to the School are:
• The bully may be warned officially to stop offending with more serious sanctions to follow any recurrence of bullying.
• A detention or other appropriate sanction may be imposed.
• The bully may be temporarily excluded from School for a period of time at the discretion of the Principal.
• If the bully persists in such behaviour, or bullying is a severe or recurring offence, he/she may be recommended for permanent exclusion (expulsion).
• In cases of bullying, reference is also made to the School’s Positive Behaviour Code.

9.7 The Designated Safeguarding Leads identified above in point 7.0, and Year Tutors, will receive anti-bullying training every two years, and the rest of the staff, including the Principal (if he/she is not the Designated Person) every three years.

9.8 The school will keep on checking with the affected parties to see if the bullying has continued or stopped. If it has not stopped, further investigation and intervention will take place.

9.9 Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a pupil is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm or abuse, the perpetrator(s) and victim(s) will be considered to be ‘at risk’ and as such, the School’s DSLs will seek advice from, and refer them to, local agencies as appropriate.
ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS:

- Student Planner
- Positive Behaviour Code
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

HELP ORGANISATIONS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)</td>
<td>0808 800 5793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Legal Centre</td>
<td>0845 345 4345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIDSCAPE Parents Helpline (Mon-Fri, 10-4)</td>
<td>0845 1 205 204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parentline Plus</td>
<td>0808 800 2222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Access</td>
<td>020 8772 9900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying Online</td>
<td><a href="http://www.bullying.co.uk">www.bullying.co.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beatbullying</td>
<td>0845 338 5060 or <a href="http://www.beatbullying.org">www.beatbullying.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying online</td>
<td><a href="http://www.bullying.co.uk">www.bullying.co.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kidscape [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk) for further support, links and advice.

---

**Senior School Anti Bullying Policy**

Mr E McCabe
Chair of Governors

Mrs M Shinkwin
Designated Governor