ANTI-BULLYING POLICY
Senior School

Introduction

The School recognises that bullying causes serious distress, affecting a person's wellbeing, health and development and can, in some cases, cause significant harm. It can also have a negative impact on the teaching and learning process. The School believes that all members of the community, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to protection from all types of harm or abuse. The School also works to ensure that a student is not treated unfairly because of her appearance or dress and the School will ensure that pupils with special educational needs and disabilities engage in the activities of the school together with children who do not have special educational needs and disabilities.

This policy incorporates:
* Ways in which the school community will try to develop the students' social interaction skills, school systems and the school environment so that bullying is **prevented**;
* Procedures for **action** to be taken if bullying is reported;
* **Support** and guidance available for victims;
* **Sanctions** and guidance to be used with perpetrators of bullying.

This policy is compliant with the contents of:
* ISI Regulations (2012, updated September 2023)
* *Tackling Bullying: Advice for School Leaders, Staff and Governing Bodies* (DfE, 2017)
* Equality Act, 2010
* Children and Families Act, 2014
* Searching, Screening and Confiscation Advice for Schools (DfE, 2022)
* KCSIE

And it incorporates strategies from:
* *The Use and Effectiveness of Anti-bullying Strategies in Schools* (2011)
* *'Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying'* (DfE, 2014)
* *'Cyberbullying: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff'* (DfE, 2014)

Governors, staff and students will work to:
* Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
* Advance equality of opportunity
* Foster good relations across all members of the school community.

The School will not discriminate unlawfully against, harass or victimise a student or potential student in relation to admission procedures, educational provision or access to any benefit, facility or service, and it will not subject students to any other detriment.

Criminal Law relating to bullying

Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, some types of harassing or threatening behaviour could be a criminal offence under the following laws:
* Protection from Harassment Act 1997
* Malicious Communications Act 1998

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It is an offence to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or to send something with an indecent or grossly offensive message or a threat or information that is false and known and believed to be false by the sender.

- Communications Act 2003
- Public Order Act 1986

If a member of staff feels that a criminal offence may have been committed, s/he will consult with the Deputy Head (Pastoral) who will discuss with the Head Mistress whether the assistance of the police will be sought.

Aims of the anti-bullying policy

In line with the values and ethos of the School, our anti-bullying policy serves to provide a supportive, friendly and safe environment for all students and staff, where bullying is not tolerated; a place where staff can teach and students can learn in a secure and relaxed atmosphere and achieve their full academic potential. There is an expectation within the school of excellent standards of behaviour and mutual respect with staff and older pupils modelling positive conduct. Success and achievement, both inside and outside the classroom, are celebrated in order to encourage this positive environment within school. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following other policies:

- The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- The Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education Policy
- The ICT & E-Safety Policy

Definition of bullying

There is no legal definition of bullying, however, it is usually defined (see gov.uk) as behaviour that is repeated and intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally.
It takes many forms and can include:
- Physical assault
- Teasing
- Making threats
- Name calling
- Cyberbullying

Such bullying is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability, or because a child is adopted or is a carer. The bullying may be motivated by actual differences or perceived differences. Child on child bullying/abuse occurs when a young person is exploited, bullied and / or harmed by their peers who are the same or similar age; everyone directly involved in child on child abuse is under the age of 18. 'Child on child' abuse can relate to various forms of abuse (not just sexual abuse and exploitation) and occurs when there is any kind of physical, sexual, emotional, or financial abuse or coercive control exercised between children both on and offline. Crucially it is noted that child on child abuse is harmful to the child perpetrator as well as the victim.

Bullying can be the action of one individual or a group. It can be face-to-face, indirect or using technology (mobile 'phones, text messages, social media applications, photographs and e-mail).
This policy is primarily aimed at preventing the bullying of students.

Objectives of the anti-bullying policy

- To ensure that staff, students and parents understand what bullying is, so behaviour that may be construed as bullying can be avoided
- To provide students with personal and social education about friendship and other relationships and social interactions, so that they become more aware of the importance of their own responsibilities in maintaining good working relationships and personal friendships
- To recognise that the emotional /social interaction and decision-making skills in a young person's brain are not fully developed; to understand that they will make mistakes and that they will need adult guidance

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- To take preventative measures against harassment by educating students about differences between people and by including assertiveness training and anti-bullying strategies in the curriculum
- To provide students, staff and parents with a clear set of procedures to be followed by staff if bullying is reported, with the intention of de-escalating and stopping any continuation of the harmful behaviour
- To investigate, immediately and with an open mind, any incidents of alleged bullying in order to collect **and record** evidence that helps to determine the sequence of events and possible motives
- To apply sanctions against perpetrators of bullying that are reasonable, proportionate and consistent, in order to emphasise that bullying behaviour is wrong
- To help bullies understand the consequences of their actions and to teach them different ways of behaving
- To support and safeguard victims of bullying and to provide them with guidance on how to deal with future incidents of harassment
- To apply the school's behaviour management sanctions if a student is found to have made a false allegation of bullying against a fellow student

Prevention

The School has clear expectations of all students. The School aims to:

- foster a culture of respect for others, tolerance, kindness, honesty, and service, where pupils are encouraged to contribute to their community, locally and globally.
- support the aspirations of individuals and encourage the development of resilience and self-confidence, so that all pupils can become tenacious, independent and happy.
- empower students to think for themselves and to experiment, express opinions, develop new ideas and challenge stereotypes and encourage each other to be 'risk-takers', embracing the importance of failure and viewing challenges as stepping-stones to future progress, enabling them to be self-confident agents of change.
- inspire a lifelong love of learning and promote the highest standards of intellectual curiosity and academic rigour among both our staff and pupils.
- prioritise the all-round development of all and encourage the pursuit of enjoyment, fun and mindfulness; recognising that happiness is fundamental to success.

The school recognises the value of involving parents, to ensure that they are clear that the school does not tolerate bullying and are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being bullied. Parents should feel confident that the school will take any complaint which suggests bullying seriously, thoroughly investigate it and resolve the issue in a way that protects the child. Equally this approach will reinforce the value of good behaviour at home.

All pupils will be encouraged to understand the School's approach, so that they are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders.

The School will provide effective staff training, recognising that anti-bullying policies are most effective when all school staff understand the principles and purpose of the school's policy. This includes its legal responsibilities regarding bullying, how to resolve problems, and where to seek support. Staff should understand the needs of their pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND), those with adverse childhood experiences (ACE) and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) pupils. Bullying can happen to all children and young people and it can affect their social, mental and emotional health. The School's staff training will include a recognition that pupils are more likely to be the target of bullying because of the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves. For example, those with special educational needs or disabilities, those who are adopted, those who are suffering from a health problem or those with caring responsibilities may be more likely to experience bullying because of difference.

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The school will strive to make it easy for pupils to report bullying so that they are assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted on. It is recognised that pupils should feel that they can report bullying which may have occurred outside school including cyber-bullying.

Methods of bullying

Verbal or by image	Being insulting, abusive, offensive, hurtful; name-calling; spreading rumours; using sarcasm; using peer pressure on other students to make them act in ways that cause them to underachieve or to lose self-esteem; hurtful teasing; 'banter'. It can be spoken or written. It can be placed on computers / mobile phones: via text messages or photographs/videos on smart phones/ social media applications/ e-mails/ chat rooms/ websites.
Physical	Violence of any form – for example, pushing, kicking, punching, hitting. Taking, damaging or hiding belongings
Behaviour	Behaviour (or non-verbal communication) which others find intimidating, unfriendly, threatening, tormenting; excluding from friendship or working groups. Peer pressure to behave in inappropriate ways

Examples of discrimination, harassment and victimisation

Race or religion, belief or culture	Offensive mimicry; taunts or jokes; wearing of provocative badges or insignia; racist graffiti; making fun of customs, accent or dress; refusal to co-operate or work with others of a different race, religion or culture
Homophobic	Comments that are offensive towards a person's sexual orientation
Sexist Sexual	Comments denigrating one gender Uninvited touching, sexual innuendo or propositions, pornographic images or graffiti, comments about emerging puberty or appearance
Disability/ special educational need	Offensive comments; taunts or jokes
Pregnancy Maternity	Discrimination which contravenes legal requirements
Age	Offensive language; discrimination in relation to job opportunities

It is important to recognise that girls frequently experience friendship issues in the early years of secondary school. These can be very distressing, but they are not usually classified as bullying. However, girls will be supported in handling such issues, for example by resolving conflict through open discussion in the presence of a trusted member of staff.

Different roles within bullying incidents
1   **Ringleader**
     The person who directs bullying activity through their social power
2   **Assistants**
     They actively join in the bullying, sometimes because they are afraid of the ringleader
3   **Reinforcers**
     They give positive feedback to the bully, perhaps by smiling or laughing
4   **Outsiders / bystanders**
     They stay back and remain silent and therefore appear to support the bullying.

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5   Defenders
They try to intervene to stop the bullying and comfort students who experience it.

Roles and responsibilities: Dealing with bullying incidents among students

It is the responsibility of <u>all</u> staff and governors to be alert to possible harassment, **to deal with incidents of bullying as the highest priority** and to follow the principles and procedures in this policy when following up cases of bullying.

Specific responsibilities are stated below:

- The **Governors** will evaluate and review the anti-bullying policy and will ensure that the policy complies with best practice:
- The **Head Mistress** and **Deputy Head (Pastoral)** will review and amend the policy, using staff experience of dealing with bullying incidents in the previous year to improve procedures <u>and</u> taking account of new legislation and government guidance. The Deputy Head **(Pastoral)** will keep a file of details on all incidents that s/he deems to be bullying.
- The **Deputy Head (Pastoral)** and **Deputy Head (Curriculum)** will ensure that relevant staff receive training updates as required. Amendments to the policy will be discussed with the Pastoral Team at Pastoral Team meetings and circulated to staff by the Deputy Head **(Pastoral).** Heads of Year / Section will be given guidance by the Deputy Head **(Pastoral)** as incidents occur, as part of their training.
- The **Deputy Head (Curriculum)** will arrange and monitor staff supervision duties, in order to ensure that there are no permanently unsupervised areas where bullying of students might occur **('vulnerable spaces')**
- The **Pastoral Team** will follow up reports of bullying of students:-
  Form Tutor - Minor incidents and friendship issues
  Head of Year - Serious incidents
  Head of Section – More serious incidents
  Deputy Head (**Pastoral**) - Very serious incidents
  Head Mistress - Bullying incidents requiring suspension or expulsion
  In all cases, the Head of Year, Head of Section, Nurse, Deputy Head **(Pastoral)** and Head Mistress will be informed via CPOMS.
- The **Well Being Co-ordinator** will provide up-to-date resources on bullying issues, and will ensure that there are Well Being sessions on the nature of bullying and how to deal with harassment within the programme at appropriate stages of student development
- **Subject teachers** will ensure that
  - they are alert to possible bullying situations, particularly exclusion from friendship groups, and that they inform the Form Tutor of such observations
  - they select working groups and pairs so that girls have the opportunity to work with a <u>variety</u> of peers, not only friendship groups, through the year
  - the composition of groups shows sensitivity to girls who have been the victims of bullying
- The **School Nurse,** often the first person to receive reports of bullying of students, will offer emotional support to the victims, and will alert the relevant Head of Section, Head of Year and Form Tutor.
- **Parents** are asked, via the Parent Handbook, to inform the Form Tutor or Head of Year if they are concerned that their daughter might be suffering bullying.
- **Students** are asked, via the Student Planner, to tell a member of staff immediately if they are bullied or if they witness bullying of any other girl. They can also use the SHARP email address to make a report.

The Deputy Head Mistress (Pastoral) reserves the right to review School CCTV cameras in the investigating of a report of bullying.

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Line of referral for a member of staff

If a **member of staff** feels that s/he is being bullied by another member of staff (or indeed by a student), s/he should speak to the Line Manager in the first instance. If the Line Manager is the source of the alleged bullying, the member of staff should speak to the Deputy Head (**Curriculum**). Every effort should be made to resolve issues between staff informally through discussion. If there is agreement that the behaviour is indeed bullying and the intimidating behaviour continues after the informal discussion, the member of staff should keep a written log of incidents and may choose to follow the grievance procedure.

Line of referral for a student

Students are advised, in their Planner, to tell their Form Tutor, Head of Year, School Nurse or other trusted member of staff if they feel they are being bullied or treated unfairly in any way. Guidance is given on prevention and protection against cyber-bullying in the Student Planner.

Promoting the policy and procedures to students, parents and staff

- Students will be informed of anti-bullying procedures in the Student Planner
- Parents will be informed of procedures via the Parent Handbook, which is updated and issued annually.
- The awareness of staff about the principles of the school policy, best practice, legal responsibilities, methods to resolve and prevent problems and the sources of support available, is raised during staff meetings and briefings. Staff are also expected to read and understand the School policy on an annual basis via the staff handbook. Updates made to the policy will be emailed to staff.

Bullying outside school premises

If bullying that occurs outside school is reported to school staff, it must be recorded, in writing, and passed to the relevant Head of Year **within twenty four hours** of receiving the information.

The Deputy Head Mistress (Pastoral) reserves the right to investigate and take action on a bullying incident outside school premises if it has a negative effect on relationships within school or if it has the potential to damage the good reputation of the School.

Monitoring, review and evaluation of the anti-bullying policy

- Details of investigative interviews will be sent to the Deputy Head (Pastoral) who will collate this information and revise procedures as necessary.
- An anti-bullying file will be maintained by the Deputy Head (Pastoral), who will make decisions on whether a class or year group need additional inputs on how to work co-operatively with others.
- Information on bullying incidents will be passed on to staff via Tuesday briefing and advice given on action to de-escalate and stop bullying behaviour
- Student questionnaires to audit the extent of bullying will be conducted, regularly, with students to monitor the extent (in any) of bullying
- The anti-bullying policy will be reviewed and updated at least every three years by the Deputy Head (Pastoral), and sooner if new government legislation or guidance becomes available.

The guidance on the following pages relates specifically to bullying of a student by peer(s).

ANTI-BULLYING PROCEDURES

Staff guidance: General information
- Treat reports by students of bullying (including cyber-bullying) very seriously.
  Do not ignore reports or suspicions of bullying.
  Unpleasantness by one student towards another must always be challenged.
- Take action immediately. This applies to all staff, not only teaching staff.
- If bullying is **discriminatory** or involves **persistent harassment** or **assaults**, it is a criminal offence. Report it to the Deputy Head (Pastoral) or Head Mistress immediately.
- Produce a written record of each bullying incident and give this to the appropriate Head of Year, who will alert the Deputy Head (Pastoral).
- Respect a student's request that information is not discussed with other students.
- Support the victim in the weeks following the reported incident, to ensure that the bullying has stopped.

Staff guidance: Referral procedure if bullying is reported or witnessed
Interviews should be recorded on CPOMS and shared with the Form Tutor, Head of Year, Head of Section, School Nurse and Deputy Head (Pastoral).

For minor incidents
Report the incident to the student's Form Tutor, who will investigate and inform the Head of Year, Head of Section and School Nurse in writing of the outcome, on CPOMS.

For serious incidents
Inform the **Head of Year, Head of Section** and the **Deputy Head (Pastoral),** one of whom will investigate and record the interviews and outcome in writing and log on CPOMS.

In the unlikely event of a physical assault, call for the School Nurse immediately and report to the Deputy Head (Pastoral).

If there is reasonable cause to suspect that a student is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the bullying incident may be treated as a Child Protection issue. In this case, the Deputy Head (Pastoral) / Designated Safeguarding Lead will inform Children's Services of the student's local authority.

If the student has a special educational need or disability, the member of staff investigating will inform the SENCo and the School Nurse.

If the bullying involves any of the categories covered by the Equality Act (see paragraph 1, page 1) inform the Deputy Head (Pastoral) immediately.

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Staff guidance: (1)   Investigation procedures

If the student is injured, take her immediately to the Nurse for a medical opinion of the extent of the injuries.

A. Interview the victim first.
- Act as soon as the bullying is reported.
- Use a room that allows you to interview in privacy.
- Ask the alleged victim to **write down details** and to sign and date her account. This may need prompting with questions from you afterwards to obtain the full picture – time, location, details of the incident, exact words used, any relevant previous incidents, names of any witnesses, etc. Ask for printouts of any relevant computer communications. Ask to see relevant mobile phone messages, capture these by photographing the screen from a school iPad, and the student to send these to you via e-mail, or write down the content and origin.
- If bullying is by students from another school, the Head of Section or Deputy Head (Pastoral) should telephone the relevant Head of Year or Deputy of the other school to report the allegation and ask for a return call on the result of their investigation
- Avoid making premature assumptions of guilt at this stage. **It is very important not to make judgements or consider outcomes before you have interviewed all concerned students.**
- Offer support and strategies to help the young person; signpost to relevant websites (see Student Planner)
- If the bullied student may perhaps have initiated a sequence of events that ultimately led to the bullying incident, for example by using inappropriate words in an email, help her to understand how this might have been misinterpreted.
- Instruct the alleged victim that she must not communicate with others about the bullying.

B. Interview the alleged bully and any bystanders
- It is important that other interviews take place without girls being able to discuss or text / email matters concerning the allegation with each other.
- The interview with the alleged bully should be immediately after the alleged victim's interview,
- Interviews with bystanders should take place at the same time if possible, but separately, to reduce the possibility of communication / intimidation.
- Ask the alleged bully and bystanders to **write down details,** and to sign and date the accounts. This may need prompting with questions from you to obtain the full picture.
- Reiterate to witnesses that there are no innocent bystanders – they are all responsible if anyone was suffering bullying and they took no action to help
- Be non-confrontational.
- Do not attach blame until your investigation is complete.
- Listen carefully to all accounts – several students saying the same thing does not necessarily mean they are telling the truth, particularly if they have had an opportunity to discuss the incident in advance.
- Adopt a problem-solving approach that moves a bully on from justifying herself. Ask the alleged bully to suggest ways in which the incident might have been avoided and how the current situation could be improved.
- Tell all students interviewed that they must not discuss the interview with other girls.

Staff guidance: (2)   Recording procedures

- Write a brief summary of the incident(s) on CPOMS, linking in the names of other pupils who are involved.
- Add a final rational statement to the CPOMS which outlines why this incident was/was not considered to be bullying

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- Ensure to alert the Deputy Head (Pastoral) on CPOMS, who will print off the incident and store a hard copy in the Bullying Incidents file (kept in the Deputy Head (Pastoral) office)
- The Deputy Head (Pastoral) should ensure that each incident is read on CPOMS, in order to discuss a proposed and offer advice, including knowledge of any previous involvement in bullying.

Staff guidance: (3) Action to punish the bully

A. Take appropriate action to deal with the behaviour of the bully

• If you are satisfied that bullying did take place, help the bully to understand the consequences of her actions and face up to the harm she has caused. Warn her that there must be no further intimidation. Inform her of the type of sanction to be used and what will happen if bullying is repeated. (See below)

• If possible, try for reconciliation and genuine apology from the bully.

• Realise that some students have not appreciated the distress they were causing and are willing to change their behaviour. Do not force a face-to-face meeting. This must be the decision of the student who has suffered the bullying.

• Try to reach agreement on reasonable long-term behaviour and how the bully can repair the harm caused.

• Prepare the bully to face her peer group – discuss what she will say to others in order to limit rumours.

• Inform parents in writing within five school days if their daughter has been involved in bullying others. State what action you have taken and what punishment will be/has been imposed.

• Apply an appropriate level of sanction commensurate with the seriousness of the bullying(see below).

B. Sanctions

Sanctions to deal with bullying behaviour will be dependent on the level, seriousness and persistence of the bullying and will take account of any special educational needs, disabilities and needs of vulnerable students, but will follow the hierarchy of sanctions in Chapter 3 of the Staff Handbook. They will be consistent with previous similar investigations.

For minor / single incidents

An apology and assurance that bullying will stop and one of the following:

-a detention OR
-a piece of extra written work OR
-community service within the school OR
-temporary exclusion from certain areas of the school premises OR
-withdrawal of permission to use ICT or have a mobile phone in school

In more serious cases, the perpetrator may be given several detentions and/or asked to sign a behaviour contract. Only the Deputy Head (Pastoral) can issue a behaviour contract, in consultation with the Head Mistress. Parents will be asked to come into school to discuss the contract and the reasons for it.

Tougher sanctions will be needed if there has been violence.

If the situation continues to cause damage to the learning environment, a change of class may be considered for the perpetrator.

In very serious cases of severe and persistent bullying, suspension from lessons or even suspension from school may be considered. In the most extreme cases, a student may be expelled. Only the Head Mistress can make a decision on these forms of punishment.

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Staff guidance: (4)   Action to support the victim

A. Follow-up checks

Please note that all follow-up checks must be recorded on CPOMS.

   • If the victim visits the Nurse, the Nurse should check informally whether the bullying has stopped.
   • The Head of Year should check with the victim formally on a weekly basis for a month after the complaint of bullying, but not in front of the class and again during the same half term.

B Support strategies
   • Prepare the victim to face her peer group – discuss what she will say to others.
   • Break up the group dynamics by assigning students to different places in class and in the form.
   • Most bullying groups have a ringleader with other girls being frightened of not bullying.   Teach the victim to be assertive if confronted by the ringleader:
   - Try to stay calm. Practise controlled breathing. Ignore the comments; pretend not to hear and walk away quickly OR
     use body language to look determined, strong, and positive. Look the perpetrator in the eye and tell her to stop. Be firm and clear.
   • Provide training to the student on building and maintaining working relationships.
   • Give constructive advice if the victim seems to have been bullied because she is being a nuisance or intruding.
   • Encourage the victim to tell a trusted adult in school straightaway if bullying is repeated.
   • Encourage the victim to broaden her friendship groups by joining a lunchtime activity or team.
   • Discuss bullying in a year assembly or in the form and ask the class to suggest possible solutions.
   • If bullying is about a particular issue (disability for example), mount an education programme during form time, not focused on a particular child.
   • If bullying occurs on the bus, ask a sixth former to keep an eye on the victim and offer support if needed
   • Ask another student to befriend and support the victim as a peer mentor.
   • Use peer mediation to defuse tension and resolve further conflict if appropriate, using trained students to define the problem, identify key issues, discuss possible options, negotiate an agreement, and evaluate outcomes
   • Use theatre-in-education performances on bullying to raise awareness.

Staff guidance (5) Prevention of bullying through the curriculum

• Issues regarding bullying, methods of dealing with bullying, peer pressure, prejudice and discrimination, stereotyping and assertiveness training will be discussed in the Well Being Programme.
  Role play scenarios enable girls to practise how to react in bullying situations.
• Assemblies are another vehicle for teaching students about the differences between people and the importance, for instance, of avoiding prejudice-based language and of promoting kindness in all relationships
• Well Being inputs will cover friendships, teaching students how to manage their relationships with others constructively.
• Well Being sessions will include co-operative group work to enable students to explore issues by considering different points of view and to become integrated into the peer group.
• Well Being sessions will include learning on protected characteristics and mutual respect towards others (in line with Fundamental British Values).
• Opportunities for teacher-guided discussion of similarities and differences in major religions will be provided in the Religion and Philosophy curriculum.
• The Year 7 residential in the early Autumn Term will act as bonding exercises to enable girls to work co-operatively in teams.

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- Staff will encourage student co-operation and the development of interpersonal skills through the use of group work and pair work in teaching methodology. Students will be allocated to groups selected by the teacher, and these will be changed at regular intervals to allow girls more contact with a wider circle of students in their year group.
- Victims of bullying will be drawn into working groups with children who do not have a history of difficulties with the victim, and who the member of staff views to be positive for their social development (using their professional judgement and perhaps seeking advice from the Head of Year).

Opportunities to extend friendship groups and interaction skills will be provided through participation in House and **extra-curricular activities and events** such as drama productions, Theme Days, Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Young Enterprise and Sports Leaders Award, Model United Nations conferences, concerts, charity and social events.

Staff guidance (6) pastoral support systems

- The School Nurse will provide a supportive and caring space for students to talk through relationship difficulties on a confidential basis.
- The School Council will provide an opportunity for students to suggest improvements to aspects of school life.
- Each Year 7 and Year 8 Form will be allocated at least two Sixth Form Prefects to act as mentors.
- Additional Sixth Form students are available to act as personal mentors on request to the Head/s of Junior Sixth / Senior Sixth.
- When investigating bullying incidents, staff will remind students about the part they can play in the prevention of bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders.
- Assemblies will raise awareness of the negative consequences of bullying, for example during Anti-Bullying Week and how students themselves can help in the prevention of bullying.
- Assemblies will provide opportunities to celebrate students' success and build self-esteem.
- A Bus Code of Conduct, developed with other local schools, aims to improve the standard of behaviour on journeys to and from school.

Staff guidance: Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying is particularly difficult to control as it can be directed at a person at any time of day or night and wherever they are. Social media posts which contain bullying material can be forwarded to wider society. The Office of National Statistics Research (2020) estimates that one in five children aged 10 to 15 have experienced at least one type of online bullying behaviour. Cyberbullying has the potential to lead to psychological problems such as depression, loneliness, low self-esteem, school phobias (including school avoidance) and social anxiety. Staff are asked to follow the guidance when they are advising students who are victims of cyber-bullying.

Most technology is used very responsibly. Young people generally use the internet or mobile phone in a positive way as part of their personal, social and academic development. Unfortunately, modern technology is also used negatively. The School expects that its students will not use technology inside or outside school premises as part of cyber-bullying and that both student and parents will co-operate with any reasonable investigation of the use of that technology by the School.

Students allowed usage of mobile phones is explained in the Student Handbook.

Cyber-bullying is defined as the use of technology deliberately to upset someone else. The following technology may be involved:

- Mobile phones
- Computers or laptops
- Devices, e.g. iPads
- Games consoles

The following methods of communication may be involved:

- Instant messaging platforms, e.g. Microsoft Teams, WhatsApp
- Social Media Applications, e.g. Snapchat, Instagram
- E-mail
- Chatrooms and message boards, including comment sections on webpages
- Video hosting sites
- Gaming sites
- Virtual Learning Environments

The law has recognised that there is no longer a clear boundary between behaviour within a school and the external behaviour of its students. Unpleasant messages or images may be sent outside school time. Naturally we would expect parents to play the main role in dealing with any out of school incidents and guidance is provided to parents about setting clear boundaries with regards to their child's internet use in introductory evenings at the start of the academic year. If there is a clear link between a student's distress in school and inappropriate bullying behaviour offsite by other students, for example on the bus to and from school or through computers and mobile phones, we reserve the right to take such action as is reasonable with a view to stopping the alleged bullying and helping to restore relationships. This may involve a ban on bringing a mobile phone onto school premises or a search through a student's phone by a senior member of staff where a student is reasonably suspected of involvement in an incident of cyber-bullying. Inappropriate files or images may also be deleted.

Parents are also advised that there is a general increase in the use of fake profiles from which students can bully each other. Unless there is evidence of criminality in what is said via such fake profiles, there is very little the School can do to identify who is responsible unless evidence indicates blame. In such situations, support can be offered to the victim and social networking hosts advised of the profiles which can then be taken down.

The guidance for parents and students below is adapted from the DfE document 'Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying', published in November 2014.

Parent Handbook: How to prevent cyber-bullying: advice to students

- Remember that anything you place on technology (examples listed above), can be made public within seconds. You have very little control over this. **Nothing is guaranteed to stay private**. Whatever you send to others can travel world-wide and could stay on-line for ever. University admissions officers and future employers may be able to view messages, films and photos posted years before.

- Be careful what you say on-line or in text messages write when communicating online. It is easy to upset someone by not reading carefully what you have written before pressing the SEND key. Be careful what images you send.

- If you receive a nasty or rude message about someone, or a photo of them, **do not forward it** to anyone. Doing this means that you will be taking part in the bullying. You could even be breaking the law.

- Keep your password to yourself. Do not let anyone see you key it in. Do not let anyone know it or use it. Change your password regularly. Choose hard-to-guess passwords with symbols or numbers. This makes it harder for others to hack into your account.

- Only give your mobile number or personal website address to loyal friends whom you trust completely. Remember also that some people change friends often, especially in the early teenage years.

- Choose the highest security settings on internet sites; do not rely on default settings.

- Most social media services and other sites have a button you can click on to report bullying. Doing this can prevent a bully from targeting you and others in the future. Many services take bullying seriously and will either warn the individual or eliminate his or her account.

- Save the evidence. Always keep a copy of offending e-mails, text messages or a screen grab of online conversations and pass to a parent or a teacher.

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- While you are on your mobile phone make sure you also pay attention to your surroundings.

- If you see cyber-bulling taking place, support the victim. Report the bully. Bullies get away with bad behaviour if no one tells.

  For further advice:

  https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/parents-and-carers

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

How to respond if you are bullied: advice to students

- Do not reply to bullying messages

- Do not retaliate by sending unpleasant messages back.

- Use the blocking and reporting facilities of the website.

- If necessary, change your contact details such as your instant messaging identity or your mobile number.

- Save the evidence. Keep copies, records and dates of offending messages, pictures and on-line conversations.   Evidence will be needed by school, internet service providers and mobile phone companies. If the cyber-bullying breaks the law, the evidence may be needed by the police for an investigation.

Note that internet service providers will remove messages or photos only if they break the law or the company's own terms and conditions.

- To get help:-

  - tell a parent or adult you trust

  - call a helpline like Childline on 0800 11 11

  - check the provider's website to see how to report incidents

  - ask your school for support and advice

  If the cyber-bullying breaks the law, your parents may decide to contact the police.

We hope that the guidance given above is helpful to parents. We advise parents to be alert to signs of upset or withdrawn behaviour in their daughter after her use of the internet or a mobile phone.

We also recommend that parents use the advice from Safer Internet UK to ensure that parental safety controls are set up on devices and/or social media applications:

https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/parents-and-carers

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