



Anti-Bullying Policy (Prep School)

Applies to	Prep School
Responsibility	Head of Prep School
Approving Body	Pastoral and Recreation Committee
Date reviewed	Michaelmas 2025
Next review	Michaelmas 2026

Introduction

Creating a culture with high expectations of behaviour will benefit both staff and pupils, establishing calm, safe and supportive environments conducive to learning. (*Behaviour in Schools 2022*)

Bullying is never acceptable in Wells Cathedral School. It is important to recognise that although bullying does happen we must seek to nurture a culture in which pupils are valued as people; a culture where bullying, when it occurs, is dealt with in a firm, sensitive and caring way. All members of the community have a duty to be alert to possible instances of bullying and to take action immediately.

The School has the ability to discipline pupils for bullying behaviour that occurs even when the pupil is not on school premises or under the lawful control of school staff (*Education and Inspection Act 2006*)

1. What is bullying?

Bullying occurs when an individual or group repeatedly and intentionally hurts, threatens, or targets another person over time. It often involves a power imbalance – such as greater physical strength, social status, or influence – which makes it difficult for the person being targeted to defend themselves. In some cases, a single incident may also be considered bullying if it causes significant harm to the individual.

Bullying can take a wide range of forms. Some of the different types of bullying recognised by the school include:

- Emotional bullying is when a victim is taunted and called hurtful names. Often he who engages in this form of behaviour does not consider it to be bullying, but considers it to be "a joke". If the victim does not find teasing or taunting funny then it is not.
- Physical bullying should not be seen merely in terms of a pupil being physically assaulted. It can include damage done to the victim's property, clothing or schoolwork. Bullying can be both mental and physical as, for example, when a group of pupils gangs up against an individual or isolates him.
- Cyberbullying is bullying behaviour through mediums which may include texting, phone calls and the posting of comments on social network sites, email, posting of photographs etc. In order to tackle cyber-bullying, staff do have a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones. (*Education Act 2011*)
- The way in which pupils relate to one another online can have a significant impact on the culture at school. Behaviour issues online can be very difficult to manage given issues of anonymity, and online incidents occur both on and off the school premises. Online space differs in many ways, the same standards of behaviour are expected online as apply offline, and that everyone should be treated with kindness, respect and dignity. (*Behaviour in Schools 2022*). As part of this, schools and colleges should provide a safe environment to learn and work, including when online. Filtering and monitoring are both important parts of safeguarding pupils and staff from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. Clear roles,

responsibilities and strategies are vital for delivering and maintaining effective filtering and monitoring systems. It's important that the right people are working together and using their professional expertise to make informed decisions. (Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges 2023)

- Sexual bullying including unwanted physical contact, sexually abusive comments and homophobic or gender orientation bullying which focuses on the issue of sexuality. (*Equalities Act 2010*)
- Disability bullying occurs when disabled children or those with special educational needs encounter barriers to inclusion in the form of other people's attitudes and in the excluding practices of institutions (*Equalities Act 2010*)
- Racial bullying is when behaviour or language is used that makes a pupil feel unwelcome or marginalised because of their colour, ethnicity, culture, religion or national origin (*Equalities Act 2010*)

Bullying can lead to physical or psychological damage and even suicide and therefore the long-term effect is extremely serious. It is important however to note that what might appear to be a bullying incident could be a straightforward fight or breakdown of a relationship and should be treated as such.

2. Why do bullies bully?

A bully often comes from a background in which bullying is considered to be "normal" in some way. He or she believes that they can get the respect of their peers by bullying. He or she often feels inadequate, unhappy and insecure. Frequently the only means by which they can feel superior is to dominate those whom they perceive to be weak. The bully may need help. Research suggests that to regard bullying as a straightforward discipline problem is not acceptable. Pre-emptive discipline could make the problem worse. It could reinforce the bully's perception of their esteem among their peer group, and exacerbate his or her antagonism towards the victim. It is important that a bully is helped to see the hurt they inflict on their victims and made to understand that their behaviour cannot be tolerated. In the long term if a bully is able to get away with bullying they are likely to continue to bully in later life.

3. Who gets bullied?

It is important to state that anyone can be bullied but that no-one deserves to be bullied. Whatever the reason, a victim must be helped and protected. They need to be assisted to develop the personal resources they need in order to overcome the difficulties they are facing.

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to return to school.
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet.
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others.
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing, or are damaged.
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary).

- Diminished levels of self confidence.
- Frequent visits to the Medical Centre with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches, unexplained cuts and bruises.
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class.
- Choosing the company of adults.
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact.
- Difficulty in sleeping, experiences nightmares.
- Talking of suicide or running away.

4. How does a pupil report bullying?

Where a pupil is experiencing behaviour they believe to be bullying, they should:

- avoid engagement and interaction with the bully where possible
- retain any evidence of bullying (e.g. texts, emails, screen shots, photos etc.)
- report the incident using the procedures below:

Tackling bullying is the responsibility of all staff. A pupil may report concerns related to bullying to any member of staff in the school that they feel comfortable speaking to. This may often be the pupil's tutor, house parent or head of year. Such staff will liaise with other appropriate members of staff as outlined below. Sometimes concerns about bullying may be reported by the pupils' friends, or parents in a similar manner.

5. Procedure for Following up an Incident

Please remember that to ignore is to condone!

- i. The member of staff concerned should see the Deputy Head or Head (Yrs 3-6) or Head of Pre-Prep.
- ii. The aggressor and the victim should be questioned separately (by the teacher/Deputy Head) to hear both sides of the story as soon as possible (either immediately the incident happens or at the next break - note that a cooling off period may be required so that pupils may calm down).
- iii. Both students should then have the chance to meet and talk about what happened, so they can try to sort out any misunderstandings or disagreements – with the teacher's support playing an important role. However, this should only happen if it's appropriate for the situation and both students feel safe and comfortable to do so.
- iv. If there are disagreements, then witnesses should be seen (separately from the two pupils involved).
- v. The witnesses should not be confronted with the two pupils involved.
- vi. Following any report of child-on-child sexual violence or sexual harassment offline or online, We will follow the general safeguarding principles set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) – especially Part 5. The designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is the most appropriate person to advise on the school's initial response. Each incident should be considered on a case-by-case basis. (*Behaviour in Schools 2022*).

If, in the view of the teacher, there is a major issue, a written record of what takes place must be given to the Deputy Head and or Head. *Most issues will not require this more formal action.*

- vii. It must be made clear that the incidents should stop straight away and that it is expected that any recurrence must be reported straight away by the victim.
- viii. The form teacher or Deputy Head should inform both sets of parent/s or guardians of the incident and discuss with them the immediate course of action that will take place as soon as practicable.

It must be pointed out very firmly that this is NOT telling tales!

- ix. Staff should check with both the aggressor and the victim ***on a daily basis*** that everything is alright for at least a week / ten days. This will give comfort to the victim to let him/her know that staff are interested in his/her welfare and also alert the aggressor that the incident has been taken very seriously. After the ten days the form teacher in consultation with the Deputy Head and Pastoral Care of the Prep School must review the case as to whether we escalate proceedings or the intervention has been successful and only occasionally checking in is required until the end of the term. The form teacher should record their responses via C-POMS and share them with the appropriate staff.
- x. While bullying is always treated as a serious matter, the School's response will be proportionate and consistent with our Behaviour Management Policy. Each case will be considered individually, taking into account the nature, frequency and impact of the behaviour, as well as the age and understanding of the pupil involved. Sanctions and interventions will therefore follow a graduated approach, which may include restorative work, loss of privileges, parental meetings, targeted support or formal disciplinary measures. Persistent or severe bullying, or a failure to respond positively to earlier interventions, may ultimately lead to suspension or permanent removal from the School.

A record of the interview must be taken

Patterns of behaviour over time can be tracked through the records kept. This log will be used via Isams whereby the appropriate staff will be shared and they will record any incidents of behaviour along with any action taken at the time. This will also coincide with the report card if appropriate.

- xi. Action will be taken in line with the section on offences.

6. Areas where incidents are most likely to occur are:

- in the changing rooms;
- in the playground - corners not visible from the normal area of patrol
- in toilets;
- classrooms when a teacher is late for class;
- at the change of a lesson when two classes are passing each other (opportunity for niggles).

Staff should take care to check these areas and be prompt for lessons.

A written record will always be kept of any bullying incidents and will be recorded on C-POMS where the necessary staff can read and add further detail. In the Pre School, bullying issues are dealt with by the Prep School Deputy Head or Head of Pre-Prep who keep records of all issues that occur. This information will be used to inform the development of the School's anti-bullying work. It also helps to identify patterns of behaviour over time of a pupil or a group of pupils. Incidents should be followed up for some weeks afterwards by the member of staff who has dealt with the incident to check that victimisation is not continuing, and that patterns of behaviour have not fallen back into place.

The School will discuss with parents/carers/guardians any incidents of bullying in which their child has been involved, either as victim or perpetrator.

7. Involving Other Agencies

Under the Children Act 1989, a bullying incident will be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to suspect that the child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. In such cases the school's concerns will be reported to the local authority social care department. The school may also engage with other outside agencies, such as the police, where we believe there is the potential for a criminal case to be had.

8. Counselling

The aim is to make bullying stop and this can be achieved initially by talking through the situation with both bully and victim without the need for punishment. Evidence suggests that when the problem is tackled in this way a mutual understanding and empathy can develop. Both parties must be assured that they are safe and that someone is dealing with the problem. The bully must be made to see the antisocial nature of their behaviour and appreciate the hurt they are causing. Clear boundaries and expectations of behaviour must be established. In addition the school will offer help and support to bullies in giving up their bad habits.

9. What can Wells Cathedral School Do?

Our ethos must be one in which all pupils are valued not only by the teaching staff but also by their peers. The way in which staff treat pupils and each other must reflect this ethos:

- Pupils should not be humiliated and made to feel inadequate.
- All members of the community must be vigilant and observant, particularly in areas which are slightly out of sight and where pupils might be vulnerable
- All areas of the school will be appropriately supervised
- All members of the community should be sensitive to changes in behaviour, moodiness, and patterned absenteeism.
- All members of the community should draw to the attention of the Year Heads, House Staff or Assistant Head (Pastoral & Co-curricular) pupils over whom problems may be sensed.

- Whole school pastoral trends including bullying are referred to the welfare team, and reviewed on a weekly basis.
- Alleged bullying which focuses on the areas of equality and diversity (bullying on the basis of race, colour, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or disability will be seen in the context of the School's commitment to promoting an environment where all members of the community are valued and celebrated equally for their differences
- As part of the School's PSHE programme, various issues to do with bullying are discussed across all ages. In addition the use of drama, historic and current events etc. are used to raise the topic
- All staff receive training to understand the principles and purpose of the School's policy, its legal responsibilities regarding bullying, how to resolve problems, and where to seek support.

10. Conclusion

The School has established pastoral procedures. Pupils, having been encouraged to speak out about bullying, must be counselled, as must the bullies. This is not something that an individual teacher can do by themselves and should be followed up in consultation with form teachers in morning briefings, the School Counsellors (should they be involved), the DDSL & DSL and/or the Deputy Head of the Prep School. It must be stressed that teamwork among colleagues will achieve the best results.

11. Action on Bullying

Every person in Wells Cathedral School belongs to a caring community in which we try to live together happily and where we always respond to anyone who is unhappy or worried about anything. Every person in the School has the right to be treated with courtesy and respect. No one should be bullied.

Bullying is when a more powerful person or group of people intentionally intimidate anyone in order to cause physical or emotional distress.

12. **BULLYING IS ALWAYS WRONG**

Anyone who stands by while someone is bullied and does nothing is helping the bully. If you are being bullied or know of anyone else who is being bullied you **MUST** tell. You could tell a parent, older pupil, teacher or adult whom you trust. The important thing is to let somebody know so that the School can deal with it. If we all work together we can make Wells Cathedral School bully-free. Remember, there is nothing wrong with you if you are being bullied. You need help in stopping the bullying. The bully needs to be helped too.

BULLYING HAS NO PLACE IN WELLS CATHEDRAL SCHOOL