

Whole College Anti-bullying Policy

All cases of bullying are serious, whether physical or emotional/psychological.

The aim of the policy is to clarify the kind of behaviour seen as bullying (and therefore unacceptable) and to outline what girls and staff should do if they become aware of any such behaviour.

Preventing bullying of any sort ensures that everyone can operate in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. All members of the community should have an understanding of what bullying is and aim to help members of the school community to deal with bullying when it occurs and, even more importantly, to prevent it.

Bullying is an anti-social behaviour which affects everyone; it is unacceptable and it will not be tolerated. Everyone in the community has a responsibility to report any incident of bullying that comes to their attention and these reports will always be taken seriously.

This anti-bullying document has been written in accordance with best practice guidelines in the:

- Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for School Leaders, Staff and Governing Bodies, July 2017
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2021

The College Aims:

1. To create an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding.
2. To raise awareness with discussions about differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice to help pupils/students to develop positive strategies and to become assertive without using threats and violence.
3. To be vigilant and report any concerns about possible bullying to Form Tutors, Year Coordinators, the Deputy Principal (Pastoral) and Principal. In the case of Melrose, the Class Teacher, the Deputy Head and Head Teacher.
4. To record all incidents of bullying. These are kept on CPOMS and on the Central Bullying record in the Secretary's office, including where parents have made us aware for information only.
5. To establish the facts of any bullying incident, before considering the use of a range of sanctions available. (In extreme situations parents may be asked to take their daughter from College either on a short term (suspension) or long term (exclusion) basis).
6. To offer counselling to support the victim and the bully.

7. To stay in touch with the parents, if appropriate, and inform them if matters improve as well as if the problem continues.
8. The School will raise awareness of the staff through training and take action to reduce the risk of bullying at the times and places where it is most likely to occur.
9. The key points from this policy will be prominently displayed on School notice boards and will be discussed with pupils/students during Tutor and Class Teacher led sessions.
10. Anti-bullying will feature as a discussion point for Student voice. It will also be revisited as necessary during PSHEE sessions to all years and reinforced in other areas of the curriculum as the opportunities present themselves e.g. drama, physical education and through Assemblies.
11. The record of bullying offences will be reviewed by the Deputy Principal (Pastoral) and the Pastoral teams in the Senior School and Melrose regularly to watch for patterns and check that the policy is effective.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying may be defined as any deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually but not exclusively repeated over a period of time, which intentionally hurts another pupil or group physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups and it is often motivated by prejudice. Examples of unacceptable bullying behaviour include:

- Physical – where a pupil/student is physically punched, kicked etc.
- Verbal - name calling, teasing or making offensive remarks
- Cyber-bullying - use of ICT by an individual or group in a way that is intended to upset others. Examples include using social media websites such as Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat, chat rooms, apps, mobile phone calls, text messaging, photographs, video and e-mail.
- Personal and emotional, including threats to exclude or where a pupil/student is excluded from discussions/ activities/ social events with those she believes to be her friends or experiences persistent hurtful comments and gestures.

Bullying may involve complicity that falls short of direct participation by, for instance, manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It may be overt and intimidating but is often hidden and subtle. It includes actions or comments that are racist, religious or cultural, homophobic, transphobic, sexist, sexual or which focus on disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair, colour or body shape) or any reference to Special Educational Needs and/or disability. More details of types of bullying can be found in Appendix 1.

Bullying can happen anywhere: at school, travelling to and from school, in sporting teams, between neighbours or in the workplace. All colleagues should keep an open mind and be aware “*it could happen here*”. It makes the lives of its victims a misery: it undermines their confidence and self-esteem and destroys their sense of security. Bullying impacts on its victims’ attendance and attainment at school. It also affects observers who can be upset, intimidated or unsettled by what they see and hear. No one should underestimate the potential impact of bullying. No one, whether pupil, student or staff, should have to accept this type of behaviour. There are criminal laws that apply to harassment, assault and threatening behaviour.

If staff feel that a criminal offence may have been committed, they should seek assistance from the police.

Who is a bully?

Bullies are not always easily recognisable – be aware of stereotypes and preconceptions. A girl may temporarily become a bully as a result of some traumatic event e.g. a death, a family break up.

Children sometimes bully other children because:

- They don't know it is wrong.
- They are emulating older brothers or sisters or other people whom they admire.
- They haven't learnt other, better ways of mixing with their school friends.
- Their friends encourage them to bully.
- They are going through a difficult time and are acting out aggressive feelings

Who is a victim?

Be aware of stereotypes; bullies pick on the vulnerable but who is vulnerable may not be obvious. Girls may be bullied because they seem different in some way (physical or otherwise). On the other hand, they may be bullied because they are clever, attractive or have a particular talent.

Signs that your daughter is being bullied

Bullying affects a child or young person emotionally and physically. It is difficult to detect as the physical indicators are not directly visible. Indicators that a child is being bullied is exhibited through their behaviour, attendance, engagement and achievement.

It can be hard for adults, including parents, to know whether or not a child is being bullied. A child might not tell anyone because they are scared the bullying will get worse. They might think that they deserve to be bullied, or that it is their fault.

You cannot always see the signs of bullying and no one sign indicates for certain that a child is being bullied. You should look out for indicators that a child is being bullied through their behaviour, attendance, engagement and achievement.

Indicators to consider:

- absenteeism
- making frequent visits to the medical room or toilet
- being afraid to go to school, being mysteriously 'ill' each morning, or skipping school
- overly quiet (becoming withdrawn/depressed)
- change in attitude or behaviour
- failure to engage in activity/opting out of activities
- being nervous, losing confidence, or becoming distressed and withdrawn

- low self esteem
- sitting alone in lessons or at lunchtime
- spending ‘free time’ alone
- under-achievement academically
- belongings getting “lost” or damaged
- physical injuries such as unexplained bruises
- asking for, or stealing, money (to give to a bully)
- problems with eating or sleeping
- bullying others
- over dependence on adult company
- becoming aggressive or disruptive
- being ‘jumpy’ when a cyber-message is received
- suffering from headaches, stomach ache, anxiety, irritability
- sleeping problems

SUPPORTING PUPILS AND STUDENTS

To reduce the risk of bullying an open, positive, caring and trusting atmosphere is nurtured in the College. Staff provide support, anticipate problems, and make opportunities to listen to students such as termly 1-2-1 meetings with tutors. Students are encouraged to share problems with staff, to speak up for their friends and peers, to look out for those more vulnerable members of the school and to not feel guilty about raising issues with teachers.

Bullying is a whole-school issue and as such the subject arises in a variety of curriculum areas. To raise awareness of bullying, all opportunities are taken to highlight the responsibilities of all members of the College to reduce the risk of bullying. Support and advice is offered to pupils/students throughout their time at College to prevent bullying. It is promoted through regular school and Year group assemblies, ‘Friendships and dealing with bullying’ make up part of the wellbeing programme for Remove – Upper Five students, as well as Enrichment for Sixth Form. Any concerns raised by staff following discussions about these topics with students will be logged and actioned where appropriate. Bullying is also explored in topics covered in the PSHCE programme and participation in Anti-Bullying week.

We take proactive approach to minimise the risk of peer-on-peer abuse, and create a supportive environment where victims feel confident in reporting incidents. Posters on notice boards which include the student antibullying policy are found in tutor rooms, as well as student planners. Noticeboards reinforce the message of speaking out, fostering an atmosphere of openness and support. Questionnaires/reviews on bullying and where it may occur as well as support are carried out.

Pupils/students also have access to an anonymous whisper button to report bullying and other issues on RM Unify.

In Melrose, this is mainly through the PSHE scheme and assemblies. Pupils are also made aware of bullying and where to get help through posters around the school. Junior girls are

supported by learning strategies to cope with their emotions in social situations through the Decider Skills programme.

If a pupil or student is subject to bullying or is the bully, the following support is given:

Pupils and students who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with their teacher or a member of staff of their choice.
- Being offered the opportunity to be referred to the college counsellor.
- Being advised to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how respond to concerns and build resilience as appropriate.
- Reassuring the pupil/student and providing continuous support to raise self-esteem and confidence.
- Working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance.

Pupils and students who have bullied will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened and establishing the concern and the need to change
- Informing parents to help change the attitude and behaviour of the child
- Providing appropriate education and support
- If online, requesting content be removed and reporting account/content to service provider
- Meeting the E-safety officer in College to consider the consequences of their online behaviour and how to act more responsibly online in future
- Sanctioning in line with College's Expectations policy. This may include official warnings, detentions, removal of privileges, internal and external exclusions.
- Where appropriate, speaking with police or local services

PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO A REPORTED INCIDENT OF BULLYING

If an incident of bullying including cyberbullying and bullying outside of College is reported (by the pupil/student or their parent), the following procedures are adopted:

- The member of staff to whom it was reported or who first discovers the situation, will control the situation, reassure and support the pupils/students involved. (If the incident is reported by another concerned pupil/student, the member of staff will discuss and agree action with the Year Co-ordinator, or the Class Teacher in the case of Melrose). We will respect the anonymity of a pupil/student who reports bullying or who requests this if reporting bullying.
- He/she will inform an appropriate member of the pastoral team (Form Tutor/Year Co-ordinator, Deputy Principal (Pastoral) or the Deputy Head or Head Teacher in the case of Melrose) as soon as possible face to face but also make a note on the Child Protection Online Management System CPOMS. In cases where there is reasonable cause to

believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, this will be reported to the DSP.

- The pupil/student reporting the incident will be asked to outline the cause of their concern and to give an account of events to their tutor, Year Co-ordinator or Class Teacher. It is important that the person reporting the incident knows that they will be taken seriously, and it will not be dismissed as “banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing” or “boys being boys”.
- The action taken to support the pupil/student reporting the incident will be agreed with them.
- The pupil/student reporting the incident will be monitored and offered support to develop a strategy to help herself. It is important to reassure the victim(s) and those reporting the incident that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.
- The alleged bully together with all others who were involved will be interviewed separately by a member of the pastoral team to get their perspective. A written account may be requested. If it is appropriate, at this stage, it will be made clear why the behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. The bully will often excuse their action as ‘banter’. It is important that the bully is aware that the subject of their banter is understandably upset and if it continues it will be regarded as deliberate bullying. The bully should understand that it is cowardly to use a position of relative strength / power to mock someone else. The pupil/student will be offered guidance on modifying her behaviour, together with any appropriate disciplinary sanctions.
- A way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and counselling, should be agreed with those involved in the incident. This should recognise that suitable support is needed for all pupils/students involved (*In many cases where it is felt that bullying has taken place, the action in the first instance will not be disciplinary or punitive. It may sometimes be the case that the bully genuinely has not recognised the distress caused to the victim by student/pupil behaviour. It may also be judged preferable to issue a warning before sanctions are applied. However, if the student responsible for the bullying behaviour repeats it, sanctions are likely to be applied.*)
- The incident should be recorded on CPOMS under the category of “bullying” including any notes from interviews with pupils/students or evidence of the bullying in the form of screen shots, diaries etc. and on the central Bullying file. It will also be added to the child protection watch list where there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.
- In serious incidents, the Principal/ Deputy Principal (Pastoral) will be informed by the person who has spoken to the pupil/student(s) involved.
- The parents/guardians of all parties will be informed if bullying has occurred, by the Year Co-ordinator or a member of SLT.
- If a criminal offence has been committed – harassment, assault or/and threatening behaviour it may be necessary to treat the incident as child protection (CP) concern and it will be necessary to make a report to Social Services or the Police.

PROCEDURES FOR MONITORING A REPORTED INCIDENT OF BULLYING

- All incidents are recorded on CPOMS by staff in College.
- As part of the monitoring and review strategy, the matter will be raised at a weekly pastoral briefing so all staff are aware of sensitivities and where appropriate, any support strategies that need to be put into place.
- A regular review of CPOMS report in pastoral meetings will enable any trends to be picked up by the pastoral team and acted upon where patterns occur.

In the case of cyber bullying

Details regarding types of cyber bullying can be found in Appendix 1 'Other types of bullying'. We reserve right to confiscate devices from pupils/students where there is a cause for concern and will follow up with pupils/students and parents as appropriate.

PARENTS

Parents and families have an important part to play in helping us deal with bullying.

- Discourage your daughter from using bullying behaviour at home and elsewhere.
- Show her how to resolve difficult situations without using violence or aggression.
- Ensure that you and your daughter are conversant with the pupil/student Anti-Bullying policy which can be found in form rooms and / or pupil/student planners.
- Watch out for signs that your daughter is being bullied or is bullying others. Parents and families are often the first to detect that a problem exists. Don't dismiss it.
- Contact the College immediately if you are worried

If your daughter has been bullied

1. Talk calmly with your daughter about her experiences.
2. Make a note of what she says - particularly who was involved; how often the bullying has occurred; where it happened and what has happened.
3. Reassure her that she has done the right thing to tell you about the bullying and discuss with her how she would like the problem to be tackled.
4. Encourage her to keep a record of any incidents including screenshots/recording of any online evidence.
4. If she considers the College should be informed, contact your daughter's Form Tutor, Year Co-ordinator or Deputy Principal (Pastoral). In the case of Melrose, your daughter's Class Teacher, Deputy Head or Head Teacher.

Talking with staff about bullying

1. Try and stay calm - bear in mind that the member of staff may have no idea that your daughter is being bullied or may have heard conflicting accounts of an incident.

2. Be as specific as possible about what your daughter says has happened - give dates, places and names of other children involved.
3. Make a note of what action the College intends to take.
4. Ascertain if there is anything you can do to help your daughter or the College.
5. Stay in touch with the College. Let them know if things improve as well as if the problem continues.

If you are not satisfied.

Families who feel that their concerns are not being addressed appropriately by the College should make an appointment to discuss the matter with the Principal.

If your daughter is bullying other children

Many children may be involved in bullying other pupils/students at some time or another. Often parents are not aware that their daughter is involved in bullying.

To stop your daughter from bullying others:

- a) Talk with your daughter, explain that what she is doing is unacceptable and makes other pupils/students unhappy.
- b) Discourage other members of your family from bullying behaviour or from using aggression or force to get what they want.
- c) Show your daughter how she can join in with other pupils/students without bullying.
- d) Make an appointment to see your daughter's Form Tutor or Class Teacher; explain the problems your daughter is experiencing; discuss how you and the College can stop her bullying others.
- e) Check regularly with your daughter how things are going at College.

Pupil/Student Anti-Bullying policy

Pupils/students are encouraged to follow these guidelines which are found in form rooms and/or the pupil/student planner. In Melrose, notices are strategically placed around the school, telling children where to go for help if they are worried or have any concerns. This policy is reviewed with our Wellbeing Action Team.

If you are being bullied the following responses should help:

1. Explain to the bully that her words/actions are upsetting and wrong; she may not be aware of this. However, if the bullying continues try not to show your feelings.
2. Walk away quickly and confidently, even if you do not feel that way inside.
3. If you are different in any way, be proud of it - it is good to be an individual.
4. Share your feelings with someone else. They may be able to advise on an appropriate course of action or will be able to involve other people who can.
5. Keep a record of incidents including screen shots of online bullying.

6. Discuss the problem with a member of staff or ask your friends to tell a member of staff on your behalf or report using the whisper button.
7. Call Childline 0800 1111 or the NSPCC (0808 800 5000).

You can help to stop bullying:

1. **Fetch help.** If the girl being bullied is in any danger. If she is not, remain with her; your presence may ease the situation.
2. **Speak up.** Show that you and your friends disapprove and that in your opinion what is happening to them is wrong.
3. **Support** girls who may be bullied. Encourage them to speak out.
4. **Never join in.** Be careful about teasing people and making personal remarks. If you think that they might not find your comments funny, then do not say them.
5. **Report it** If you know of serious bullying. The victim may be too scared or lonely to tell or offer to accompany them to see a trusted adult.

Before you speak, remember to THINK: Is it True? Helpful? Inspiring? Necessary? or Kind?

Before you speak:

THINK

T - Is it True?

H - Is it Helpful?

I - Is it Inspiring?

N - Is it Necessary?

K - Is it Kind?

When you are talking about bullying with an adult, be clear about:

- a) What has happened,
- b) How often this has happened,
- c) Who was involved,
- d) Who saw what was happening,
- e) Where it happened,
- f) What you have done about it already

Recommendations for improving the policy and procedures are encouraged including via student Action Teams. The policy will be kept under review and updated to be in line with best practice.

Supporting Organisations and Guidance

- Anne Frank Trust: www.annefrank.org.uk
- Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- Beat Bullying: www.beatbullying.org
- Changing Faces: www.changingfaces.org.uk
- Childline: www.childline.org.uk
- Childnet International: www.childnet.com
- DfE: Preventing and tackling bullying Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies July 2017

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/623895/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf

- Digizen: www.digizen.org
- EACH: www.eachaction.org.uk
- Family Lives: www.familylives.org.uk
- Internet Watch Foundation: www.iwf.org.uk
- Kick it Out: www.kickitout.org
- Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk
- Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk
- MindEd: www.minded.org.uk
- NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk
- PSHE Association: www.pshe-association.org.uk
- Pace: www.pacehealth.org.uk
- Restorative Justice Council: www.restorativejustice.org.uk
- Report it: www.report-it.org.uk
- Stop Hate: www.stophateuk.org
- Show Racism the Red Card: www.srrc.org/educational
- Schools Out: www.schools-out.org.uk
- Stonewall: www.stonewall.org.uk
- Think U Know: www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- The Diana Award : www.diana-award.org.uk
- UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk
- Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk
- Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk
- Young Carers: www.youngcarers.net

Appendix 1

Other types of bullying include:

- Sexual bullying involves unwanted and unwelcome attention of a sexual nature. This may be physical or verbal or involve the denigration of an individual on sexual grounds or by sexual Any unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment for the recipient may be regarded as sexual bullying. This includes the sending, receiving and distribution of semi-nude images or footage.
- Racial bullying is offensive action and behaviour, deliberate or otherwise, relating to race, colour, ethnic or national origin directed at an individual or group, which is objectionable to the recipient, and which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.
- Religious or Cultural Bullying involves offensive action and behaviour relating to a person's religion, belief or culture. This includes a broad definition of beliefs and cultures and includes minority religions, humanists, atheists and people of different nationalities.
- Homophobic or sexual orientation bullying is bullying directed at persons or groups on the grounds of a perceived or actual sexual orientation (applying equally to homosexual, heterosexual or bisexual boys or girls). In terms of sexual orientation, discrimination can occur because of an association with a gay or bisexual person (e.g. friend or relative).
- Disability Bullying is bullying in respect of a person's disability or impairment. This may be due to a physical disability or due to discrimination focused on a student's special educational needs.
- Online (cyber) bullying refers to any form of bullying that takes place using electronic technology, for example text messaging, picture or video-clips, email, chat rooms, social networks, instant messaging, social websites, photographs, web logs, online personal polling sites, personal websites and so on. The opportunities for bullying within this sphere are growing as the technology becomes more powerful. Students are taught to stay safe online covering subjects including extremism and radicalisation, pornography, digital footprint, cyber-crime and gambling through a variety of methods. These include: the ICT lessons, PSHCE/PSHE, collapsed curriculum days, assemblies and tutor periods. For measures regarding online safety, please refer to the ICT policy. The Ladies' College. *The Police may be informed of serious incidents involving cyber bullying. The following website gives guidance on e-safety <http://www.swgfl.org.uk/Staying-Safe> and the Childline website www.childline.org.uk is a useful source of advice for children.*