

Introduction

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*)

What is bullying?

Bullying happens when an individual (or a group) goes out of their way deliberately, persistently and over a period of time to threaten, frighten, abuse or hurt someone else, in circumstances where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves and is often motivated by prejudice.

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 behavior 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*). Further information can be found in the school's [e-Safety](#) policy.
- 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*)
- Children can also be bullied because they are adopted or a carer

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 relationship and should be treated as such.

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.

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 spoiled 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.

How does a student report bullying?

Where a student 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 student 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 student'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 students friends, or parents in a similar manner.

Action

A written record will always be kept of any bullying incidents and will be held by the Assistant Head (Pastoral & Co-curricular). Incidences of cyberbullying must be reported to and will be dealt with by the Assistant Head (Digital Strategy) in accordance with the [eSafety](#) policy. In the Junior School, bullying issues are dealt with by the Junior School Head of Pastoral Care (Years 3-6) and the Head of Pre-Prep (Nursery-Year 2), 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 of 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 haven't 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.

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.

Restorative Action

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 behavior must be established. In addition the school will offer help and support to bullies in giving up their bad habits.

Sanctions

If, following on from restorative action, bullying or unkind behaviour reoccurs then the Assistant Head (Pastoral & Co-curricular) will be involved quickly. The perpetrator may be suspended with a clear written warning given to the bully and their parents that such behaviour will not be tolerated and that continual bullying may mean removal of the bully from school.

WHAT CAN WELLS CATHEDRAL SCHOOL DO?

Create an Ethos of Awareness, Responsibility, Kindness and Respect

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.

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 Year Heads, House Staff, the School Counsellor, the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the Chaplain, or the Assistant Head (Pastoral & Co-curricular) as appropriate. It must be stressed that teamwork among colleagues will achieve the best results.

Assistant Head (Pastoral & Co-curriculum)

September 2018

Next review: September 2019

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.

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

