



URSULINE HIGH SCHOOL
Wimbledon

Anti-Bullying
Policy

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Statement of intent

At Ursuline High School, guided by our Ursuline ethos, we are committed to creating a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment for all members of our school community. Our school's mission is rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ, promoting the values of respect, compassion and service to others. We believe that every student has the right to learn, thrive and develop in an atmosphere free from bullying and harassment.

Aims of this policy

1. All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, students and parents/carers should have an understanding of what bullying is.
2. All governors and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported or suspected.
3. All students and parents/carers should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying occurs.

At Ursuline High School we take bullying seriously. Students and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported. All reported cases of bullying will be investigated.

Key Principles

1. Prevention:

We strive to foster a culture of kindness and inclusion through our curriculum, particularly PSHE and Religious Studies, awareness campaigns and regular training for staff, students and parents.

2. Zero Tolerance for Bullying:

We adopt a zero tolerance approach to bullying in any form, recognising the profound impact it can have on the emotional and psychological wellbeing of our students. Bullying undermines the dignity of individuals and it is incompatible with our values as a Catholic school.

3. Promoting Respectful Relationships:

We foster a culture of kindness, empathy and mutual respect, encouraging students to embrace one another's differences and to treat everyone with dignity. We strive to create an environment where all students feel valued, safe and empowered.

4. Education and Awareness:

We are committed to educating our students, staff and parents/carers about the nature of bullying and its effects. By raising awareness and providing training we aim to equip everyone in our community with the skills to prevent and address bullying effectively. Where students do engage in bullying they will complete a comprehensive and rigorous reflection on their behaviour and its consequences to challenge harmful behaviours and attitudes.

5. Support and intervention:

We believe in the importance of timely intervention and support for both the victims of bullying and those who display bullying behaviours. Our restorative approach seeks to understand the underlying issues, repair harm and restore relationships (where possible), fostering personal growth and helping all involved to learn from their experiences.

6. Reporting and accountability:

We encourage all students and parents/carers to report any incidents of bullying with confidence that their concerns will be taken seriously and addressed promptly. We provide clear accessible procedures for reporting incidents and ensure that all actions taken are in line with our commitment to fairness and justice.

7. Collaboration with families:

We recognise that a strong partnership between schools and families is essential for creating a lasting positive impact on our students. We are dedicated to working closely with parents/carers to promote positive behaviours and to support students overcoming challenges related to bullying.

This policy has links with the:

Equalities Policy
Behaviour Policy
Suspensions & Exclusions Policy
PSHE Policy
Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

This policy has been informed by and complies with the following legislation or DfE Guidance:

Education Act 2011: This includes provisions that allow schools to take action regarding incidents of bullying including off-site behaviour

Children Act 1989 and 2004: They highlight the importance of protecting children and promoting their wellbeing.

Equality Act 2010: The act requires schools to address bullying related to any of the protected characteristics to ensure that all students feel safe and valued.

SEND Code of Practice 2015: Emphasises the importance of understanding the needs that may make a student more vulnerable to bullying and ensuring appropriate support is in place.

Keeping Children Safe in Education updated 2024: includes information on preventing and responding to bullying.

Behaviour and Discipline in Schools 2016: Outlines the responsibilities of schools in promoting good behaviour and tackling bullying effectively.

Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools 2016: encourages schools to consider the mental health implications of bullying

DfE Guidance on Preventing and Tackling Bullying 2017: provides information on how to create a culture where bullying is not tolerated and how to deal with bullying effectively.

Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England 2017: includes provisions related to bullying and how schools should handle incidents that may lead to exclusion.

Definition of bullying

Bullying is defined as any deliberate, repeated and harmful behaviour that aims to intimidate, harm, isolate or control another individual. It can occur in various and numerous forms and can happen in person or online. Bullying can involve an imbalance of power, where the perpetrator uses their power to exert control over the victim.

Key components of the definition

Intentionality: Bullying is a deliberate action taken with the intention to harm. It is not accidental or a one-off incident.

Repetition: Bullying behaviours occur repeatedly over time, rather than isolated incidents. A single act does not constitute bullying but could contribute to a pattern of behaviour if repeated.

Power imbalance: Bullying often involves a power imbalance where the perpetrator has more social, physical or emotional power than the victim. This can manifest through age, size, popularity, access to resources or social status.

Impact on victims: Bullying negatively impacts on the emotional and psychological wellbeing of victims. Leading to feels of fear, anxiety, low mood and a diminished sense of safety in school or online in the case of cyberbullying.

Types of bullying

1. **Physical:** Hitting, punching, kicking, tripping up or any form of physical aggression.
2. **Emotional:** threats, threatening gestures, tormenting (such as hiding belongings) or damaging personal property.
3. **Verbal:** name-calling, insults, use of unwanted nicknames, teasing, insults, or any derogatory comments
4. **Social:** exclusion, interfering in a relationship between peers to cause hurt, spreading rumours, manipulating social relationships to harm someone's reputation.
5. **Sexual:** sexually abusive or harassing comments, gestures or actions.
6. **Cyber:** using digital platforms (social media, messaging apps, texts, emails, Teams etc) to harass, threaten, belittle or intimidate someone. This could also include the use of these platforms to spread rumours or to share private information (doxing). The school recognises that perpetrators of cyber bullying sometimes try to conceal bullying by indirectly referencing their victim. Where it is, in the school's judgement, reasonable to assume the identity of person indirectly referenced this can be used as evidence of bullying.

Cyber bullying primarily takes place off school site and outside of school hours using devices that are owned by parents rather than school laptops. We will investigate and respond to cases of cyber bullying where it impacts on the running of the school.

Parents are expected to take an active role in monitoring their child's social media and phone usage. Ensuring young people's safety online is a shared responsibility and we encourage you to discuss appropriate boundaries together. Engaging in open conversations about digital citizenship and the potential risks of social media will help foster a safer environment for our young people. Parents are asked to be mindful of the age restrictions set for various apps and encourage adherence to these guidelines.

A victim of bullying may be targeted because of their:

- Religion or belief
- Culture or class
- Gender
- Sexual Orientation (homophobic or biphobic bullying)
- Gender Identity (transphobic bullying)
- SEN or disability
- Appearance or health conditions
- Home or personal situations

Where bullying is focused on a protected characteristic according to the Equality Act 2010 it can constitute a criminal offence.

Bullying can occur in the following situations and at the following times:

Travelling to and from school

In school at any time where there is no staff supervision

On school trips and visits

In the toilets

In lessons

On the internet or social media platforms including Microsoft Teams

Procedures for dealing with suspected or reported bullying

Any student or member of staff aware of any form of bullying or harassment should report it immediately to the relevant person (usually the Head of Year) and record the incident on CPOMs.

Those alleged to have been bullied should be interviewed by the relevant person (usually the Head of Year) and a written statement should be taken.

Those accused of bullying should be interviewed by the relevant person (usually the Head of Year) and a written statement should be taken.

Any possible witnesses should also be seen in isolation and asked to provide written statements.

Consequences for bullying

In the **first instance** (depending on severity) the perpetrator(s) will be reprimanded by the Year Head or, where appropriate, a senior member of staff.

Perpetrator(s) will complete the Anti-bullying Reflection Workbook either in a detention or Internal Suspension. The completed workbook is placed on the student's file as record that they understand the impact of bullying behaviours.

Where possible, a restorative conversation, supported by the school Chaplain, Head of Year or member of SLT, should be offered to allow the victim to voice the impact the behaviour has had on them and an opportunity for the perpetrator to reflect on that testimony and offer an in-person apology. Students should be prepared for restorative conversations individually by the Head of Year before they take place by discussing its aims, the scope of the conversation and a reminder of the school values.

The outcome of the investigation, including consequences imposed must be recorded on CPOMs by the Head of Year.

Parents of those that were bullied and the perpetrators will normally be informed by the Head of Year.

Repeated or serious incidents should be reported to the Assistant Headteacher Behaviour or in their absence a Deputy Headteacher or directly to the Headteacher and the relevant Head of Year should coordinate gathering of statements and inform all relevant parents/carers of the investigation.

The Assistant Headteacher (or Deputy Headteacher) will make a recommendation to the Headteacher which would mostly likely be: internal suspension, external suspension, or in some cases timed intervention off-site or supported move and in very serious cases permanent exclusion. If the student has not previously completed the Anti-Bullying Reflection Workbook it should be completed during the suspension.

Parents of those that have been bullied and the perpetrator(s) will normally be informed of the outcome of the investigation by the Assistant Headteacher Behaviour on the day that the consequence is determined by the Headteacher.

Other strategies for reducing the incidence of bullying

- As a school community we have a strong focus on the key Christian and Ursuline values of respect and kindness. This is reinforced through assemblies, Religious Education lessons, form time activities and the day to day language that we use about behaviour around the school.
- The key principles of Dignity, the Common Good and Solidarity found in Catholic Social Teaching are explicitly taught in Religious Education and reinforced throughout the curriculum ensuring students understand the value of all people and their duty to contribute to social justice.
- Students are explicitly taught about different types of bullying, signs of bullying and the effects of bullying as well as how to successfully manage conflict, healthy relationships and the development of friendship in teenage years as part of the PSHE and RSE curriculum supported by assemblies and other activities throughout the year such as National Anti-bullying Week.
- Perpetrators can be helped to change their behaviour by receiving counselling or other relevant services to address the underlying issues negatively influencing their behaviour towards others. Referrals will be made where appropriate.
- If appropriate, Restorative Justice Conversations can be held between parties to allow students to 'clear the air' and agree a positive way forward. Where students feel unable to conduct a Restorative Justice Conversation a written Behaviour Agreement may be a suitable alternative in some cases.
- Bullying incidents and trigger words/phrases of concern online are monitored by our Smoothwall system and followed up promptly by our pastoral teams.
- Students who feel that they are being bullied can be referred to Year 12 peer mentors. This peer mentoring can assist students in resolving disputes. The peer mentors are supported by Assistant Head Teacher Behaviour.
- Referral of parents/carers to the parenting courses to enable parents/carers to develop behaviour management strategies.

Responsibilities

Victims: As a school we understand that students can be fearful or worried about reporting bullying. However, we can only respond to alleged bullying if we are made aware of it. Students can report bullying to any adult in school that they trust or feel comfortable talking to. Alternatively, parents/carers can report bullying to their child's Head of Year.

Witnesses: We do not accept bystander culture, whereby students see something that they know to be wrong and yet take no action. Any student who witnesses behaviour that may constitute bullying has a duty to report it to any adult in school that they trust

or feel comfortable taking to. Students will be challenged if they engage in bystander behaviour and a consequence may be imposed.

Parents of Victims of Bullying: Report any concerns about bullying directly to school and allow the school a reasonable amount of time to investigate and respond. Address any complaints about the school's response to bullying to the Assistant Headteacher for Behaviour or Headteacher rather than directing complaints to social media or other parents.

Parents of Alleged Perpetrators of Bullying: Support the school's investigation into complaints of bullying. Support your child to reflect on her behaviour and participate positively in any consequence imposed.

Class teachers and Form Tutors: Use social perception or reports from students to identify any possible bullying and report this to the Head of Year. Log any concerning interactions between students or any disclosures of behaviours that may constitute bullying on CPOMs.

Pastoral Support Assistant: Use social perception to identify any possible bullying. Take statements from witnesses. Maintain bullying logs and update CPOMs. Offer support to any student who reports bullying to them and refer on to Head of Year.

Head of Year: Use social perception to identify any possible bullying. Receive accounts of alleged bullying from students or their parents and other members of staff. Investigate all allegations using student interviews and witness statements and refer serious or repeated cases to Assistant Headteacher Behaviour. Log the outcome of all investigations of bullying on CPOMs using the 'Behaviour/bullying' toggle. Inform parents/carers of all parties involved.

Assistant Head Teacher Behaviour: support HOYs to gauge the severity of bullying and agree a suitable consequence for the perpetrator(s). Make referrals where appropriate for the perpetrators of bullying. Make recommendations to the Headteacher where appropriate to issue suspension or permanent exclusion. Monitor bullying data via CPOMs and report half termly to SLT and termly to Governors.

Assistant Head Teacher DSL: Make referrals as appropriate for the victims of bullying. Collate and return data on bullying incidents to Merton LA. Interview students and parents/carers as appropriate.

Head Teacher: Use the evidence to make decisions about appropriate action for serious or repeated cases of bullying which may include suspension or permanent exclusion. Ensure that all stakeholders are aware of our Anti-bullying policy and have access to it. Ensure all staff are adequately skilled to spot signs of bullying and know how to respond to it effectively.

Governors: ensure that the school's Anti-bullying Policy reflects the values of the school, our ethos and that it adheres to current relevant legislation. Monitor the implementation of this policy by reviewing data on incidents of bullying, how they are handled and the overall effectiveness of interventions. Governors regularly review and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy ensuring it remains relevant and responsive to the changing needs of the school community.

Monitoring & Review

Data on bullying shall be reviewed half termly at SLT as part of the broader behaviour analysis and termly with Governors. This policy shall be reviewed every 3 years.

