



# St Gregory the Great Catholic School

## Anti-Bullying Policy

*“opera in caritate”*

based upon St Gregory’s statement “The proof of works are in love”

In St Gregory the Great, we consider bullying to be a very serious breach of school values. Not only do we try to live by the Gospel rule that you should treat others as you would like to be treated yourself, but also we recognise that bullying damages both the person bullied and the bully themselves. As a result, someone who is a bully may need support inside and outside school to help change their behaviour.

We believe that students at our school have the right to learn free from intimidation and fear. We will not tolerate bullying behaviour, and will always listen to those who report bullying. All reported incidents will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated.

### **What do we mean by bullying?**

Bullies believe that they have power over others, and use that power in order to hurt or diminish someone else through words, actions, or physical behaviour. Bullying is aggressive and hurtful to the person who experiences it. It is often repeated, or can be threatened to be repeated. It can be done by individuals or by groups. It can be planned, or unintentional. **All kinds of bullying are unacceptable.**

### **Key features of bullying:**

- It is unwanted
- It is aggressive
- It is repeated
- It makes the person experiencing it feel uncomfortable
- It makes the person experiencing it feel fearful or anxious
- It isolates a person
- It excludes a person
- It creates problems that persist outside school

Bullies may not understand that what they are doing is wrong, sometimes because they are copying others’ behaviour. On the other hand, they may understand that what they are doing is wrong, but pretend that they do not. In either case, they will often use excuses if their bullying behaviour is challenged.

### **Excuses bullies use:**

- I was only joking
- We’re friends
- He/she doesn’t mind
- I wasn’t serious
- It didn’t mean anything
- What they said/did was disgusting

- ➔ They started it
- ➔ They were rude about my mum (or other family member)

Bullies will often try and turn bullying around so that it looks as though the person who is bullied was the person who upset the bully. It is often easy to tell when this is the case as the alleged response will almost always be disproportionate to the alleged offence (e.g. I hit them because they said something).

**There are three main kinds of bullying: physical, verbal and social.**

**PHYSICAL bullying can include:**

- ✗ Any unwanted physical contact.
- ✗ Pushes
- ✗ Tripping
- ✗ Shoving
- ✗ Kicking
- ✗ Grabbing or hugging without permission
- ✗ Touching hair
- ✗ Touching clothes
- ✗ Touching someone sexually
- ✗ Taking possessions
- ✗ Breaking or damaging someone's things

**REMEMBER—any unsought physical contact can count as physical bullying.**

**How do I avoid looking like a physical bully?**

- ✓ Respect other people's personal space
- ✓ Give people room to pass you when going through a door
- ✓ Queue politely when you are waiting for a lesson
- ✓ Take turns and don't push
- ✓ Be careful not to touch other people in passing—don't bump and shove
- ✓ Be careful where your arms and legs go—don't accidentally trip people
- ✓ Don't touch people (stroking hair for instance) in school—they may find it awkward to tell you they don't like it
- ✓ Don't borrow things without asking
- ✓ Don't play with other people's possessions
- ✓ Never pass on something that belongs to someone else to another person.

**What is the reverse of a physical bully?**

Someone who gives others time and space, who does not rush and push, who is careful to leave space between them and others, and who respects other people's possessions is unlikely to be a physical bully.

**VERBAL bullying can include: ?**

- Name-calling
- ✗ Using nicknames

- ✗ Swearing
- ✗ Teasing
- ✗ Threatening
- ✗ Racist comments
- ✗ Homophobic comments
- ✗ Commenting on someone's appearance
- ✗ Making jokes about someone
- ✗ Comments about someone's sexuality or attractiveness

### **How do I avoid sounding like a verbal bully?**

- ✓ Use people's everyday names—don't use nicknames in school
- ✓ Don't call someone something that you have heard someone else say, especially if you don't understand what it means
- ✓ Don't keep saying something that others have shown that they find annoying
- ✓ Don't use words that people in general find offensive even if they are not swearwords
- ✓ Don't use swearwords
- ✓ Don't use homophobic language
- ✓ Don't use racist language
- ✓ Don't imitate someone's voice or accent
- ✓ Don't make jokes about other people
- ✓ Don't promise someone that you will do something to them later if you have a fight
- ✓ Don't comment on someone's appearance
- ✓ Don't comment on someone's race or ethnic origin
- ✓ Don't comment negatively about someone's ability to do something
- ✓ Don't make comments of a sexual nature

**REMEMBER—any words that others find offensive can count as verbal bullying.**

### **What is the reverse of a verbal bully?**

Someone who speaks quietly and thoughtfully, who does not shout out across a room or playground, who is not looking for a reaction to everything that they say, and who tries to speak in a way that is kind and positive is unlikely to be a verbal bully.

**SOCIAL** bullying can include:

- ✗ Spreading rumours
- ✗ Excluding someone from a group
- ✗ Refusing to work with someone ☐ Refusing to sit next to someone
- ✗ Making comments while looking at someone and whispering or laughing
- ✗ Warning other people not to be friends with someone
- ✗ Making rude hand gestures or signs
- ✗ Embarrassing someone in public
- ✗ Writing offensive notes or graffiti about someone
- ✗ Ridiculing someone's appearance, way of speaking or personal mannerisms. ☐ Discussing someone's real or imagined sexual preference
- ✗ Sending text messages about someone or having discussions about them on Facebook or other social media sites

- ✗ Taking photos of people when they don't want you to do so
- ✗ Playing a practical joke on someone

### **How do I avoid appearing like a social bully?**

- ✓ Don't talk about people behind their backs
- ✓ Always be prepared to work with others when directed to do so
- ✓ Don't whisper about other people—it's rude
- ✓ Don't laugh about other people
- ✓ Always be prepared to sit next to someone when directed to do so
- ✓ Never make a fuss about working with your friends
- ✓ Don't make signs or gestures which could be misinterpreted
- ✓ Don't gossip about people's real or imagined relationships
- ✓ Don't use texting or social media to spread rumours or gossip
- ✓ Don't ever take a photo of someone without their consent
- ✓ If you know something private about someone else, don't share that information with others, unless it is something which involves their safety (in which case, tell a teacher).
- ✓ Don't play jokes or pranks on others.

**REMEMBER—anything that is unkind to others can count as social bullying**

### **What is the reverse of a social bully?**

Someone who is kind to others, who has special friends, but doesn't feel they always have to be with them exclusively, someone who does not gossip or use social media to gossip, who is happy to talk to others and work with others, especially when asked to by a teacher, is unlikely to be a social bully.

Other terms used for bullying:

### **Cyberbullying**

This simply means using electronic and social media as a way of bullying someone. For instance, sending texts to someone that say mean things, sending offensive pictures, photographing or videoing someone without their consent, starting rumours on facebook, 'liking' a mean comment someone else has made—these are all examples of bullying behaviour that use electronic means to help the bully put across their message.

People often believe that cyberbullying is not as bad as other kinds of bullying. This is not true. In fact, cyberbullying that involves sending texts or pictures or offensive e-mails is a criminal offence that can result in arrest and prosecution. Not many teenagers know that 'sexting' or sending indecent pictures of themselves or others is illegal and can result in being put on the child protection register.

### **Homophobic and gender bullying**

Homophobic and gender bullying is bullying that focuses on someone's real, perceived or imagined sexual preference, or which draws attention to their sexuality in a way which makes them feel uncomfortable. At its simplest, it can be using the word 'gay' in a derogatory way, and at other levels it can mean that people talk about sexual relationships in an inappropriate way, objectify others, or make them feel isolated or insecure because of their sexuality.

Homophobic and gender bullying is always unacceptable, and the school will not tolerate it. It includes sexism (where someone is treated differently because of their gender), and can include bullying because of gender dysphoria (when someone does not feel comfortable in their biological gender) and bullying because someone does not conform to others' ideas of how a boy or girl ought to behave.

### **Disability related bullying**

This kind of bullying focuses on someone's disability and so their difference from others as a route into hurting them. It might pick out a physical feature of someone to focus on, or on someone's glasses, hearing aids, crutches, wheelchair, or any other aid that they use to help them to get around and function everyday. It might be that someone's disability has resulted in an absence from school, and that this is focused on, or that it makes it necessary for them to have extra support in school, and this is focused on. This kind of bullying can also sometimes be seen when people have 'invisible disabilities' such as autism that may affect their social skills. Bullies will sometimes try and 'wind up' or upset such people because they find it relatively easy to do so, and then complain when their victim retaliates.

### **Racist Bullying**

Racist bullying focuses on the idea that all people who share certain racial characteristics such as skin colour, hair colour, eye colour or accent also share other characteristics, and that these make them somehow lesser than the bully. It thrives on the idea that people have certain stereotypes, such as laziness or stupidity that come from their race rather than their character. Like all bullying, racist bullying seeks to make people feel powerless and vulnerable. Any focus on someone's physical characteristics should be avoided if you wish to avoid seeming like a bully. For instance, teasing someone for having red or blonde hair is a form of racist bullying that people often do not realise can be genuinely hurtful.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAKEHOLDERS WITH REGARD TO BULLYING**

### **The Responsibilities of Staff**

#### **Our staff will:**

- ✓ Foster in our pupils self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others
- ✓ Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils.
- ✓ Discuss bullying with all classes, so that every pupil learns about the damage it causes to both the child who is bullied and to the bully and the importance of telling a teacher about bullying when it happens.
- ✓ Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying.
- ✓ Listen to children who have been bullied, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them.
- ✓ Report suspected cases of bullying to (name of teacher and post, eg our designated teacher for child protection/head of pastoral care).
- ✓ Follow up any complaint by a parent about bullying, and report back promptly and fully on the action which has been taken.

- ✓ Deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures.
- ✓ Participate in CPD offered to staff to help them understand ways of dealing with bullying behaviour.

### **The Responsibilities of Pupils**

#### **We expect our pupils to:**

- ✓ Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.
- ✓ Intervene to protect the pupil who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so.
- ✓ Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances.
- ✓ Not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out, to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets.
- ✓ Participate in restorative justice or other meetings designed to prevent and remedy bullying behaviour when requested to do so by staff.

### **The Responsibilities of Parents**

#### **We ask our parents to support their children and the school by:**

- ✓ Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be evidence of bullying.
- ✓ Advising their children to report any bullying to (name of a member of staff/specific post in school/their class teacher) and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other pupils.
- ✓ Advising their children not to retaliate violently to any forms of bullying.
- ✓ Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken;
- ✓ Keep a written record of any reported instances of bullying
- ✓ Informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved
- ✓ Co-operating with the school. If their children are accused of bullying, they should try to ascertain the truth, and point out the implications of bullying, both for the children who are bullied and for the bullies themselves.

### **The Responsibilities of All**

Everyone should work together to combat and, hopefully in time, to eradicate bullying.

#### **What should you do if you are worried about bullying?**

If you are worried because you, or someone you know, is suffering from bullying, you should tell a teacher straightaway. You should NOT try and deal with it yourself by responding to the bully in a bullying way (e.g. hitting them to defend someone, excluding them when they have excluded someone else, spreading rumours about them when they have said something nasty).

If you are too shy to tell a teacher, you should try and speak to someone else in school who is a grown-up. The chaplaincy team are always there to listen. Likewise, the School Nurse can be a safe adult to approach, and also the Pastoral Heads of Year. Another way to report an issue with regard to bullying is by e-mail. The e-mail [stopbullying@dbmac.org.uk](mailto:stopbullying@dbmac.org.uk) will report your concern anonymously to a teacher who will investigate it. Remember, if you want a reply you will need to include your name.

If you are concerned that the bully will find out that you 'told' on them, don't be—we are able to deal with bullying behaviour without being specific about who complained—and you will usually find that the person who bullies one person will be bullying others as well. Having said that, eventually we would want to get to a point where you and the bully might be able to talk together and move forward from the power imbalance.

### **What will we do if someone is being bullied?**

Bullying is dealt with by our behaviour team, including the Vice-Principal, The Director of Behaviour, the Director of Inclusion and Alternative Provision, Directors of Learning and Pastoral Heads of Year.

The first thing that we will do is to try and make sure that the person being bullied is safe. If physical bullying is involved, we may use a range of strategies to make sure that this takes place, including isolation at break and lunchtime for the bully, or the provision of a safe space for the person at risk of bullying. With verbal and social bullying it can be harder to identify bullying, and so classroom teachers and other staff may need to be informed to be on the alert for bullying behaviour by certain individuals, and ready to intervene. It is immensely important that parents and children feel safe to tell about bullying so as to facilitate this process. One of the key ways of stopping bullying is by educating those showing bullying behaviour.

In less serious cases it may be possible to resolve the matter by speaking to the students involved and reaching a verbal agreement that the bullying will stop.

A referral to peer mediation will sometimes be appropriate (e.g. in cases of disputes between pupils and where it is difficult to separate the bullying victim from the bully), and a longer-term programme of restorative meetings may be necessary.

In more serious cases Pastoral Heads of Year, Directors of Learning or senior staff will be involved in monitoring the situation.

### **Record-keeping**

Incidents of bullying observed by a member of staff should be reported on SIMs using the relevant code, which will refer the matter directly to the Vice-Principal. Actions taken following a report of bullying may include:

- ✓ Contacting parents/carers of all pupils concerned in the bullying incident.
- ✓ Investigation of the incident, and the obtaining of statements where possible
- ✓ Feedback to those concerned about the incident
- ✓ Sanctions, including isolation, fixed-term or permanent exclusion, and restorative approaches where possible.

- ✓ Contacting relevant professionals eg. Behaviour Management Team, Pastoral Heads of Year, Directors of Learning, Form Tutors, SENCO, Educational Psychologist, Kingfisher Team, MASH or Hub workers, Community Police liaison officer. ☑ Feedback to those concerned about actions taken.

Actions taken will be recorded on SIMs (or in the central safeguarding file where relevant). Initially with bullying issues we adopt a no-blame approach which research has shown has a greater success in resolving conflict. The no-blame approach is systematic and involves discussion with students about bullying and its effects, aiming at restorative justice.

If this approach does not resolve an issue or in more serious cases (e.g. involving repeated bullying or physical assault) where it is not safe to convene such discussions, other sanctions will be used. We are clear that pupils who bully others will face serious sanctions including isolation, fixed term and in the most serious cases permanent exclusion.

As a general principle it is important for the victim of bullying to feel that the action taken by the school is appropriate, and so in all cases we feel strongly that the bullying victim should be consulted regarding the process and informed about the action that is being taken to resolve the matter. However, although we will explain our actions to the victim, and also to parents and carers, they will not themselves be able to choose which sanctions are given in individual cases.

#### **PARTICIPATION & CONSULTATION PROCESS**

This policy will be agreed by staff and Academy Representatives, and shared with parents and carers. Information about bullying will be given to staff and students in order to heighten awareness. Ongoing consultation about bullying at St Gregory's may include, but not be limited to the following:

- ✓ Awareness raising programmes (Curriculum & parent information evenings) ☑  
Surveys/questionnaires distributed to pupils, parents and whole school staff.
- ✓ Obtaining the views of elected student representatives e.g. student council, focus groups, sixth form committee.
- ✓ Seeking the views of parents at information evenings.

Status and review cycle: annual

Next review date: June 2019