



Policy Name: Anti-Bullying Policy

Owner: Head of Pastoral

Review date: September 2025

Next Review Date: September 2026

This policy will be revised annual or as regulations or review demands

This Policy is made available to parents of all girls, day and boarding, on the School website and on request from the School Office. It is also available to all staff in the School's Shared Hub. The content of this Policy is directly discussed with all new staff upon induction into the School.

1. Introduction

At Mayfield the all-round care and development of the individual is and always has been central to the ethos of the School. The School endeavours to provide a caring and supportive environment for each individual. Based on this the School promotes the development of a range of personal skills and qualities, such as decision-making, communication, listening, negotiation, assertiveness, self-esteem and, most importantly, an appreciation of and respect for others, their values and opinions.

Unfortunately every School has some degree of bullying, even if only slight or infrequent. Therefore, a Whole-School Policy is central to any efforts to tackle the problem of bullying. The Anti-Bullying Policy provides a framework for intervention and prevention, and is linked to our Codes of Conduct, based on the compassionate and supportive ethos of Mayfield School. The Head of Pastoral is responsible for leading work to promote a culture and processes which prevent bullying and develop positive and supportive relationships.

This Policy has been drawn up with assistance from guidance by the Department for Education (DfE), *Preventing and Tackling Bullying* July 2017, *Behaviour and Discipline in Schools* (DfE February 2024), *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (September 2025, Part 5 and Annex B: child on child abuse) and the *National Minimum Standard for Boarding Schools* (2022).

The Policy, therefore, establishes a clear set of agreed aims which provides girls, staff and parents with a sense of direction and an understanding of the commitment of the School to deter and respond to bullying behaviour. To enable implementation of the Policy, the School will define procedures and systems for this.

Bullying is entirely unacceptable, inflicted by or enacted against either girls or staff. This policy applies to any bullying that might take place at the School, whomever the person harmed or the person causing harm.

2. Aims and Objectives

- To recognise and acknowledge that bullying occurs (sometimes referred to as child-on-child abuse).
- To raise awareness of bullying, and to encourage a whole-School approach in identifying and condemning it.
- To challenge bullying behaviour and make it unacceptable.
- To promote positive and helpful behaviour.
- To promote respect and acceptance of others, irrespective of creed, colour or sexuality.
- To provide clear guidelines for dealing with incidents of bullying.
- To ensure a balanced approach in dealing with bullying, recognising that bullying harms not only the person being harmed, but also those who engage in bullying behaviour and those who support them by providing support for the person causing harm as well as the person being harmed.
- To inform girls, all members of staff and parents of the Policy and its contents.
- To encourage a whole-School approach in the implementation of the Policy.
- To reduce incidents of bullying.
- To provide a safe and secure learning environment for all members of the School.

3. DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying may be defined as the intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another person by physical (including sexual), verbal (including social networking and SMS messages), and emotional means (by excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidatory.

Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time. We always treat it very seriously. It conflicts sharply with the School’s Policy on equal opportunities, as well as with its social and moral principles. Bullying is an abuse of power and the threat to use it.

Bullying takes many forms. It can be:

Emotional	Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures etc).
Cyber	Text messaging, email, photos and phone calls, TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram and other similar Social Networking sites (anonymous and otherwise).
Physical	Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, spitting, or any use of violence, taking, damaging or hiding possessions.
Verbal	Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.
Exclusionary	Intimidating, isolating or excluding a person from a group.
General unkindness	Spreading rumours, making unkind comments, writing unkind text messages, e-mails or social network messages (private or public).
Disability	Unkind comments, teasing, in relation to a person’s disability, special educational needs, learning difficulty, health or appearance.
Racist	Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
Cultural	Relating to someone’s religion, belief, culture, language, family or social circumstances.
Sexual	Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
Homo/Transphobic	Because of, or focusing on, the issue of sexual orientation.

It can be:

- Persistent; repeated over a period of time, and
- Difficult for subjects to be able to defend themselves against, so that it invades an individual’s sense of self.

Child on Child Sexual Violence and Harassment

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up. Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, sexual violence refers to: rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault. Sexual harassment refers to ‘unwanted conduct of a sexual nature’ that can occur online and offline. (Refer to government guidance: Part 5, Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2025).

4. STRATEGIES FOR THE PREVENTION OF BULLYING

▪ The Ethos of the School

The ethos of the School underpins our values and attitudes and this includes a strong stance against bullying. Central to this is the dignity of each human individual and their God given responsibility to respect and support one another. Girls are expected to treat each other and all members of staff with courtesy and respect. Adults are expected to set the best example in their professional and personal relationships with each other and the girls.

▪ The Curriculum

Through curricular work on bullying, we can achieve two very important objectives. Firstly, we can raise awareness amongst girls about bullying. Secondly, we can challenge attitudes and bullying behaviour, increase understanding for bullied girls, and help build up an anti-bullying ethos in the School.

At Mayfield, these objectives are crucial at all levels, reflected especially through our Catholic ethos and through the academic curriculum, particularly in areas such as Drama, English and R.E. The Life Skills programme has a particular focus on the identification and prevention of bullying across the age ranges of the School, and importantly also deals with related issues such as self-esteem, communication skills, friendships issues, mental and physical health issues, mutual respect, cultural difference, sexuality etc. This is complemented by the general pastoral care systems within the School, the Chaplaincy, the Tutorial System, the House System and also in Boarding Houses.

At Mayfield School, we recognise that children with SEND or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges and may be more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children since they may be less able to articulate their experiences as well as other pupils, or they may just be a greater risk of being bullied precisely because of their specific difficulties and this makes them vulnerable. The School also recognises that certain children may face additional barriers to reporting an incident because of their vulnerability, disability, sex, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation. Teaching staff need to be aware that their own actions, such as drawing undue attention to differences between SEN pupils and others, can unintentionally lead to bullying.

Our school's anti-bullying strategy reflects that unlike for our day girls, boarders who are being harmed (off line) cannot escape those causing harm for long periods of time as they are not going home as often. Boarding staff are aware of this and take measures to mitigate for this e.g. separating the pupil harmed to those causing harm, offering a safe space to work or relax in the house, liaising with Heads of Year/School to ensure continued support throughout the school day.

▪ **The Role of the Staff**

Staff play a pivotal role and they are expected to set an example, both in their dealings with each other and with girls. Staff should interact with other staff in a way that demonstrates and models positive relationship skills.

In the classroom, in extra-curricular activities, in the Boarding House, or anywhere else in School, teachers should be aware of girls being pressurised or teased by their peers. It is important that teachers pick up on these kinds of incidents and do not leave them unchallenged. As well as challenging the bullying behaviour themselves, teachers can support girls in responding to the incident.

Staff may also detect, inside or outside of the classroom, behavioural changes in a pupil which might be the result of bullying.

▪ **The Role of the Parents**

Parents who send their daughter(s) to Mayfield are informed of the School's expectations regarding behaviour the School's proactive approach in discouraging any form of bullying. Therefore, it is expected that parents will encourage co-operative behaviour in and around the home, and that parents will be quick to discourage aggressive and/or manipulative ways of resolving difficulties. If a girl is found to be bullying others, it is expected that the parents will work with the School to resolve the problem and effect a change in the pupil's behaviour. The School will always act in the best interest of the individuals involved and expect parents to support them in this.

Bullying, harassment and victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our girls and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the School. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable.

Intimidation and unkindness is often caused by unhappiness and poor self-image, and situations where trust between people breaks down. It can involve a complex and profound emotional impact for all involved. Parents and girls must feel that any suggestion of bullying is thoroughly investigated and that no-one should apportion blame without proper evidence.

5. SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

A girl may indicate by signs of her behaviour that she is being bullied. The signs may include some or any of the list below, although this is not intended to be exhaustive:

A girl:

- is frightened of travelling to and from School (where applicable);
- does not want to go on the School/public bus;
- changes her usual routine;
- is unwilling to go to School;
- attempts or threatens self-harm/suicide, or runs away;
- cries herself to sleep or has nightmares;
- feels ill in the morning;
- begins to do poorly in schoolwork;
- begins truanting;
- becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence;
- starts stammering;
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay person causing harm);
- has unexplained cuts or bruises;
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable;
- is bullying other girls or siblings;
- lacks concentration;
- seeks out the company of/clings to adults;
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged;
- has possessions that go missing;
- stops eating;
- is frightened to say what is wrong;
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

6. PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

At Mayfield School we take the following preventative measures:

- We have a number of Anti-Bullying Ambassadors from Year 9-13, who have been trained by the Diana Award Foundation. Any girl can contact them for advice and support. There are posters in the Common Rooms with the details.
- Our Life Skills programme, Tutor programmes and Liturgies are structured to give girls an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the school. The programmes are structured to enforce the message about community involvement and taking care of each other. We also use appropriate Assemblies to explain the school policy on bullying.
- Other lessons, particularly Religious Studies, English and Drama highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable and by developing social skills.
- All our girls are encouraged to tell a member of staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place.
- All reported incidents are recorded on our internal safeguarding tracking system, MyConcern and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents.
- We have a strong and experienced pastoral team of Tutors, Heads of Year, Heads of School, in addition to Housemistresses and other boarding staff, who support the Head of Pastoral, and Lay Chaplain. They are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority and are alert to possible signs of bullying.
- Our pastoral team gives support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both the person harmed and those causing harm.
- Training is provided for staff on pastoral and behavioural issues.
- The Lay Chaplain gives support and guidance to girls of all faiths who refer themselves to him. He will provide confidential advice and seek to encourage the development of tolerance, understanding and respect for others.

- The Wellbeing Centre staff are also available to give support and advice to girls and liaise regularly with the Head of Pastoral and Heads of Year/School regarding any concerns. The School has contact with counsellors and other support agencies who can be involved as appropriate.
- Staff are always present at times when girls are not in class and patrol the School site, particularly areas where bullying might occur. They are directed to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour.
- In the Boarding Houses, there are strong teams of staff supporting the Housemistress who act in loco parentis. The informal House environment is important in reinforcing a pupil's standards and values, providing the opportunity for friendly, informal discussion of matters of concern to the individual pupil outside the formal classroom. We encourage close contact between the Housemistress and parents/guardians and would always communicate if there were concerns about a girl's well-being.
- Our Wellbeing Centre and all our Boarding Houses, common rooms and other areas display advice on where girls can seek further help.
- All girls have access to a telephone helpline, enabling them to call for support in private.
- We provide leadership training to our Head Girl and her team of Prefects which specifically covers the importance of offering support and assistance to younger and to vulnerable girls.
- We would never allow initiation or similar ceremonies.
- We reserve the right to investigate incidents, involving our girls, that take place outside School hours, on School visits and trips and that occur in the vicinity of the School.
- We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures.
- We are always seeking proactive approaches to supporting girls with navigating relationships and to this end continue to adopt the Girls on Board approach for 2025-2026.

7 CYBERBULLYING

7.1 DEFINITIONS

Cyberbullying is the use of ICT deliberately to upset someone else.

It includes: threats and intimidation; harassment or 'trolling'; vilification/defamation; humiliation; manipulation, whether open or anonymous; exclusion or peer rejection; impersonation, unauthorised use of private information or images; posting without consent.

It is dangerous because it can be used to carry out different types of bullying and as an extension of face-to-face bullying. It can also go further in that it can invade home and personal space and involve a greater number of people. Cyberbullying can involve Social Networking Sites; emails and mobile phones, when used for calls, SMS messages and as cameras.

Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes

These terms used to describe the sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams by young people under 18 online.

Under the Sexual Offences Act (2003) taking an indecent image of a child (someone under the age of 18) is illegal. It is also illegal to send or keep (be in possession of) such an image. This law applies even to a young person taking and sending an image of themselves and applies to anyone receiving such an image if they do not delete it immediately. They should also advise someone appropriate (an adult) of their actions. Obviously, any sharing of such images is also illegal. There may also be further legal implications if an older pupil requests such pictures of a younger pupil. This could be viewed legally as 'grooming'.

Pupils are made aware in the IT curriculum that no data is ever completely erased from a computer or phone – should they ever find themselves the subject of a serious investigation into their 'online' behaviour forensic examination of electronic devices will retrieve all deleted images/texts etc.

Further Guidance by DfE: *Sharing Nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people*. (December 2020).

7.2 PREVENTING CYBERBULLYING

Understanding and discussion

- Staff will receive training in understanding social media and appropriate pastoral responses.
- All staff will be helped to keep up to date with the technologies that children are using.
- Students are educated about cyberbullying through a variety of means including ICT lessons, tutor programmes and Life Skills
- Pupils and staff agree to an Acceptable Use of ICT Policy when they join the School.

7.3 RESPONDING TO CYBERBULLYING

Investigation

- Staff and pupils should be advised to preserve evidence and a record of abuse; save phone messages, record or save-and-print instant messenger conversations, print or produce a screen-grab of social network pages, print, save and forward to staff whole email messages. If necessary, confiscate devices to protect the person harmed and retain evidence;
- If images are involved, determine whether they might be illegal or raise Safeguarding concerns. If a child is at risk, contact the CPO (Child Protection Officer) and local police. If a child is in need, contact the CPO – Should this not read DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead);
- Identify the person causing harm;
- Any allegations against staff should be handled as other allegations following guidance in the Safeguarding Policy under Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Staff.

Support for the students involved in a bullying incident online

- Offer emotional support; reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling; help them understand how to deal with the situation;
- Advise the person not to retaliate or reply. Instead, keep the evidence and take it to their parent or a member of staff;
- Advise the person to consider what information they have in the public domain;
- Unless the person harmed sees it as a punishment, they may be advised to change, for example, their mobile phone number;
- If hurtful or embarrassing content is being distributed, try to get it removed from the web. If the person who posted it is known, ensure they understand why it is wrong and ask them to remove it. Alternatively, contact the host provider and make a report to get the content taken down;
- Confiscate the mobile phone, ask the pupil to delete the offending content and say who they have sent it on to;
- Contact the police in cases of actual/suspected illegal content;
- In some cases, the person being bullied may be able to block the person bullying them from their sites and services.

The School's Acceptable Use of IT Policies gives further structured advice and instruction to pupils and staff on the appropriate use of IT and outlines the sanctions for unacceptable use.

8. PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH REPORTED BULLYING

If an incident of bullying is reported, the following procedures are adopted:

- The member of staff to whom it is reported or who first discovers the incident, will take control of the situation, reassure and support the girls involved.
- He/she will inform an appropriate member of the pastoral team as soon as possible, who will lead the handling of the situation.
- The person harmed will be interviewed separately from the alleged person causing harm and asked to write an account of events. She will be offered support to develop a strategy to help herself. It will be made clear to her why revenge is inappropriate.

- The alleged person causing harm, together with all others who were involved, will be interviewed individually and asked to write an immediate account of events, and it will be made clear why her behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. She will be offered guidance on modifying her behaviour, together with any appropriate disciplinary sanctions.
- The incident should be recorded in the Bullying Incident Log by the Head of Pastoral (who is also the Designated Safeguarding Lead).
- All Tutors and Housemistress should be informed. In very serious incidents, the Headmistress should be informed.
- After this initial discussion, should it be appropriate, the parents/guardians of all parties concerned will be informed and invited into School (if possible) to discuss the matter.
- A way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and counselling, should be agreed.
- This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for girls who are being bullied and for girls who bully others, as well as dealing with appropriate disciplinary measures.
- A meeting involving all the parties, with close staff supervision, could be helpful in developing a strategy for all concerned to close the episode. The individuals concerned are expected to learn from their mistakes and have an opportunity for a fresh start. Repeated incidents, however, will be regarded more gravely. In serious cases the Headmistress reserves the right to have recourse to severe sanctions.
- A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place.
- In very serious cases, and only after the Headmistress has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to the Social Services. However, it is the Policy of Mayfield School to attempt to resolve such issues internally under the School's own disciplinary procedures, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely.

9. LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour, Rewards, Consequences and Pupil Voice Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Code of Conduct for Pupils

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

APPENDIX I

SUGGESTIONS FOR STRATEGIES

Crucial to successful resolutions:

- IMPARTIAL INVESTIGATIONS would usually be carried out with the knowledge of parents of the girls concerned, if not all those under 'suspicion'. [Obviously, however, alerting those alleged to be responsible for any form of intimidation early on in an investigation, can severely limit the progress made in ascertaining facts.]
- EMPHASIS ON FACTUAL INFORMATION and gathering of accounts (in writing) at an early stage.
- Each individual who needs to be seen must feel her account was recorded accurately, objectively and confidentially.
- Every girl needs to be reassured of the objective process.
- Each person interviewed has the right to bring a companion.
- Any member of staff conducting such interviews should have an independent witness to record what is said, but this should be arranged with appropriate sensitivity to the situation.
- Sometimes it is justified, especially with older girls, to involve one or two other girls not implicated, or even friendly with the individuals making allegations or being accused, only people you are able to trust completely, in order to help monitor the situation. You should make it very clear to these girls that they are not responsible for resolving the problem, only helping to keep a 'watching brief' out of concern for unhappiness.

This approach, if appropriate, must be cleared with the Head of Pastoral or Headmistress before implementation.

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

APPENDIX II

ACTION AGAINST BULLYING: A STATEMENT FOR GIRLS

Bullying is:

The wrongful use of power to hurt and instil fear in others. It is deliberately hurtful behaviour which can be physical, verbal or indirect (spreading stories, excluding groups etc). It can be an unresolved single incident which casts a shadow over a person's life, or a series of such incidents.

Remember:

- No one deserves to be bullied.
- It is not part of growing up.
- Pain can be both mental and physical.
- It is not the person harmed's fault.
- If you witness it and do nothing, you are part of it - there are no innocent bystanders.
- Telling someone about who is bullying you and how you feel is not 'telling tales'.
- We celebrate and recognise difference – each one of us is unique.
- Remember what you might think is a joke or banter, might be hurting someone else.

If you feel you are being bullied, or you see or are told about bullying taking place:

Speak up - **TALK TO SOMEONE YOU TRUST.**

- Tell a member of staff (in your Form, in your House, in the Chaplaincy, in the Health Centre).
- Tell your parents.
- Tell a friend or a trusted senior pupil or Prefect.

If you are unsure about talking to any of the above, you can telephone ChildLine on 0800 1111; the call is free and will not show up on any telephone bills. ChildLine will help you to work out what to do next. Their approach is to listen, give options and encourage you to seek help from a trusted adult.

The telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of people who can help you are also displayed around the School ('Who Can I Talk To?' Posters).

Your views and concerns will be taken seriously.

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

APPENDIX III

A STATEMENT FOR PARENTS

Bullying is:

the illegitimate use of power to hurt others. It is deliberately hurtful behaviour which can be physical, verbal or indirect (spreading stories, excluding from groups etc). It can be an unresolved single incident which casts a shadow over a person's life, or a series of incidents.

At Mayfield School we are committed to an active Policy aimed at the prevention of bullying.

The key features of our Policy are:

- A statement about the kinds of behaviour that counts as bullying.
- Giving the clear, explicit and consistent message that bullying is unacceptable.
- Making known to girls, parents and staff what they should do if they see, or are told about, bullying taking place.
- Encouraging the reporting of bullying.
- Enacting effective procedures for monitoring incidents.
- Involvement of girls, parents and staff in the review of our Policy.

If you have any concerns regarding bullying (whether relating to your daughter or others in the School), please share these with your daughter's Tutor, Housemistress/parent or Head of School.

- We will listen patiently and with full attention;
- We will not jump to conclusions;
- We will investigate the situation sensitively and patiently.

The School – Information for Staff

At Mayfield School, we aim to promote a whole-School ethos conducive to equality of opportunity, mutual respect, co-operation and positive relationships. We help set the right ethos by:

- Giving a clear, consistent and explicit message that bullying is unacceptable;
- Encouraging the reporting of bullying via clear procedures;
- Contacting the parents of all girls concerned;
- Dealing sensitively with each and every potential incident;
- Developing strong, positive pupil-staff relationships;
- Providing an intermediary service (i.e. encouraging senior girls to report any concerns about junior girls);
- Involving girls in decision-making.

We raise awareness by:

- Surveying opinion;
- Significant coverage of bullying and related issues in the Life Skills programme and during Tutor time;
- Offering practical help.

We deal with issues of communal living through:

- Language work, giving girls the power to convey their experiences;
- A Life Skills education programme as an integral part of the curriculum;
- Co-operative group work in Houses;
- Activities which encourage pro-social values;
- Liturgies and the prayer life of the School.

We support vulnerable girls by:

- Having systems for identifying and referring vulnerable girls;
- Giving emotional support and practical advice;
- Providing assertiveness and social skills training;
- Providing opportunities for friendship formation;
- Peer support;
- Strong pupil-staff relationships.

We aim to change bullying behaviour by:

- Setting the right anti-bullying ethos;
- Helping girls communicate more effectively in conflict situations;
- Providing positive role models;
- Teacher and peer mediation;
- Sanctions;
- Peer mentoring.

We evaluate all procedures by:

- Monitoring incidents over time in order to identify high risk areas or age groups;
- Looking critically at changes and the effectiveness of School procedure.

The views and concerns of the girls are always taken seriously and given due weight in reaching decisions.