

Anti-Bullying Policy

General Statement

Bullying will not be tolerated at Culford. Bullying is the hurting, humiliating, threatening or frightening of another person and can ostracise individuals, cause psychological damage and even suicide. It may be repeated over time and intentionally hurts another pupil or group physically or emotionally and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability, or because a child is adopted or is a carer – it may occur directly or through cyber-technology (social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email).

This policy provides a framework and guidance within which all staff, both teaching and support staff, can operate.

It should be read alongside:

- Preventing and Tackling Bullying – Advice for Head Teachers' (DfE 2017)
- Cyber bullying: advice for Head Teachers and School Staff (DfE 2017)
- Other related school policies – for example Equal Opportunities, Racial Equality, Behaviour and Discipline, SEN
- Teaching online safety in schools (DfE, January 2023)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2025)
- Culford Safeguarding (Child Protection) (Policy September 2026)

Help Organisations

- Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) 0300 0115 142
- Children's Legal Centre 0845 345 4345
- KIDSCAPE Parents Helpline (Mon-Fri, 10-4) 020 7823 5430
- Parent line Plus 0808 800 2222
- Youth Access 020 8772 9900
- Bullying Online www.bullying.co.uk
- Kidscape website www.kidscape.org.uk

Action the School takes to Prevent Bullying

The School outlines to existing and new parents its policy on bullying; parents receive further advice as appropriate, for instance on cyber safety. Modules on bullying form an important component of the Learning for Life Course at all levels. As part of their programme of training, both School and House Prefects discuss bullying. They are instructed in what to do should they become aware of bullying. It is also part of the induction training of new teachers.

Records of incidents of bullying are kept on the pupil's file and follow the pupil between the parts of the School. The word 'bullying' will be used when the School has decided that bullying has taken place.

Disciplinary sanctions reflect the seriousness of an incident of bullying and convey a deterrent effect.

Pupils are educated about bullying through structured Learning for Life programmes, assemblies, projects, drama, stories and literature. These may cover discussion of differences between people and may include topics such as the importance of avoiding prejudice-based language. Pupils are encouraged through all pastoral networks to tell if they have concern, they can also access Tootoot, an online platform to report any bullying, cyberbullying or general worries, or contact the Independent Listener.

Regular training is carried out by way of discussion in staff meetings to raise awareness of possible bullying, how this can be identified and measures that can be taken. Training supports staff understanding of the principles of the School policy, and legal responsibilities. Actions are defined to resolve and prevent problems, and the sources of support are available; where appropriate, the School may invest in specialised skills to understand the needs of their pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBTQIA+) pupils.

How the School Deals with Bullying

Any alleged bullying should be reported as soon as possible directly to the Housemaster/mistress or Head of Year who will inform the Deputy Head Academic, Deputy Head (Pastoral and Boarding) and Assistant Head Safeguarding. Under no circumstances will incidents that could be construed as bullying be ignored. All offences are carefully investigated and those involved interviewed by their Head of Year or Housemaster/mistress, the Deputy Head (Pastoral and Boarding), Designated Safeguarding Lead or Safeguarding Attendance Officer or Senior Deputy Head. A record is kept of the interviews. All cases are dealt with on an individual basis. Victims receive support and bullies are counselled on appropriate behaviour.

Any allegations involving allegations of bullying involving any form of sexual behaviour, including online, must be referred directly to Deputy Head(Pastoral and Boarding) , DSL and recorded in the Wellbeing Manager.

Records are monitored by the Deputy Head (Pastoral and Boarding) and Designated Safeguarding Lead so that patterns can be identified. Action is taken to address times or places where bullying is most likely, for instance outside the school day.

Where an initial incident involving potential bullying or bullying behaviour is identified and the matter is addressed at an early stage, the school may use a **restorative approach**. The purpose of this process is to educate and support pupils in understanding the impact of their actions, rather than focusing solely on punishment. This may provide an opportunity for all parties involved to explain their feelings, emotions and the reasoning behind the decisions they made. Where appropriate, and with the agreement of all parties, this may involve a facilitated discussion in which pupils meet together with a member of staff acting as a mediator. The aim is to promote understanding, take responsibility, repair relationships and agree on a positive way forward.

Severe or repeated cases of bullying may result in suspension or expulsion and will be reported to the police or social care if there is belief that a crime has or may have been committed. Bullying incidents should be treated as a child protection concern where it is reasonable to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and will be reported to Children's Social Care.

The types of incidents towards pupils with protected characteristics and patterns of behaviour will also be monitored by the ESG so that any issues can be swiftly acted upon if required. These protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

The role of pupils

Pupils must let someone know if they are being bullied. They must recognise they have a responsibility for themselves. Bullying will not disappear if ignored. Pupils should inform their form tutor in the first instance, although it does not matter which member of staff is told, any member of staff will listen.

The role of parents

Parents have a responsibility to support the School's anti-bullying policy and to actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the School. Bullying is often referred to as 'the silent nightmare' because many children are too ashamed to admit that they are being bullied.

Signs parents can look for:

- Not wanting to go to school or starts to truant
- The child becomes shy, withdrawn and lacking in confidence
- Having 'mystery illnesses,' nonspecific pains, tummy upsets, headaches
- Arriving home with unexplained cuts/bruises or with clothing torn
- Becomes frightened of walking to school. There may be a desire to change route or to go/return much later than usual

- The child may become withdrawn, lacking in confidence and reluctant to meet other children
- The pupil may experience personality changes e.g. irritable, withdrawn, tired, poor sleeping, weepiness, crying outbursts, loss of appetite, forgetfulness
- The child may develop temper outbursts, abusive language or impulsive hitting out
- Bed wetting and nightmares may start when a child is being bullied
- being secretive around their mobile phone usage; unexpectedly stops using their devices; changes in behaviour after using their devices.

What parents can do about bullying:

- Discuss the matter sensitively with the child by encouraging them to talk about behaviour generally rather than specifically to themselves
- Sympathise, listen carefully and try calmly to find out what happened
- Reassure the victim that the bullying will cease
- Inform the school and discuss the matter with the class teacher or senior member of staff. It is neither appropriate nor acceptable to take matters into your own hands i.e. approach the 'bully' at school or through online methods
- If the bullying is in school or on the journey to school, work out a plan of action with the staff and ensure it is put in place
- Do not advocate a 'hit back' policy. This may be alien to your child's temperament and make the situation worse
- If you feel the school policy could be improved please inform the senior teachers of your suggestions about things we could do together to increase children's safety

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is defined as the sending of malicious, intimidating, or hurtful text messages, emails or photographs, or posting of malicious, insulting or other hurtful descriptions or comments on social networking sites, or during instant messaging conversations including those within computer games. Particular features of cyberbullying are:

IMPACT	the scale and scope can be greater than other forms of bullying
LOCATION	there is a 24/7 and any place nature of cyberbullying
ANONYMOUS	the person being bullied will not always know who is attacking them
MOTIVATION	some pupils may not be aware that what they are doing is bullying
EVIDENCE	there will be evidence of its occurrence

In the event of cyberbullying, the victim must save the evidence and immediately report the incident to their tutor, Head of Year or Housemaster/mistress who will inform both the Senior Deputy, Deputy Head (Pastoral and Boarding) and Assistant Head Safeguarding. Written records should be entered onto Wellbeing Manager. In extreme cases service providers or Social Network site hosts may need to be contacted to block calls or unwanted comments.

Cyberbullying initiated from outside School will still be investigated by the School and carry the same penalties as it would if it were carried out in School.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment

Children are vulnerable to abuse by their peers (known as child on child abuse). Such abuse is taken as seriously as abuse by adults and is subject to the same child protection procedures, regardless of whether they have occurred inside, or outside the school premises or online, including within computer games. Professionals must never dismiss abusive or harmful behaviour as normal between young people and should not develop high thresholds before taking action which could normalise such behaviour. All signs, reports and concerns of child on child sexual violence, sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) should be reported to the Assistant Head Safeguarding and Wellbeing. The School recognises that girls are more likely to be victims than boys and that males are more likely to be perpetrators. The School uses the AIM (Assessment Intervention and Moving on) assessment model to assess young people who have committed a sexual assault or harmful sexual behaviour. We recognise that problematic, abusive and sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. Where sexual violence includes an online element, it is imperative that staff do not view or forward illegal images of a child. In such cases, referral to external agencies may be required; please see the Child Protection(Safeguarding) Policy.

Victims will be reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. Sexual harassment should never be passed off as 'banter', 'having a laugh', 'part of growing up' or 'boys being boys.'

The School recognises that all parties involved, including victims, perpetrators and any other child affected by peer on peer abuse, will need individual support, which could come from any member of the pastoral team including peer counsellors, external agencies (including charities) and health care professionals. Children may not find it easy to tell staff about their abuse verbally and a report may come from staff overhearing a conversation. If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare they should act immediately by reporting to the DSL or an alternative DSL in person, asking the office to locate the DSL, or in a non-emergency, by reporting through Wellbeing Manager.