

Anti-Bullying Policy

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1. Introduction

This school is completely opposed to bullying and will not tolerate it. It is entirely contrary to the values and principles we work and live by. All members of the school community have a right to work in a secure and caring environment. They also have a responsibility to contribute, in whatever way they can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment.

We actively promote positive interpersonal relations between all members of the school community.

In common with all other schools, we recognise that some students at St Benedict's will experience bullying of some kind, but we will work hard to eradicate it.

In its extreme form it can constitute a criminal offence. It is a denial of human rights and a denial of equal opportunities.

2. We believe that:

Pupils have a right to learn free from intimidation and fear.

- The needs of the target pupil are paramount.
- We will not tolerate bullying behaviour.
- The target pupil will be listened to.
- Reported incidents will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated.
- All students have the right to attend school.
- All students have the right not to be afraid.
- All students should feel happy and safe at school.
- All students should be able to trust the staff to act.
- All students should know the school policy on bullying.
- Parents should be able to raise their concerns about bullying.
- Staff and students should respect each other and treat each other with kindness and courtesy.
- Our ethos and curriculum will reflect these beliefs.
- The anti-bullying procedure and the penalties for bullying should be made clear to all Students, Parents and Staff.

3. Definition

Bullying behaviour abuses an imbalance of power to repeatedly and intentionally cause emotional or physical harm to another person or group of people. Bullying is an act of aggression, causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to someone. It can take several forms; physical, verbal, making gestures, extortion, exclusion, harassment and sexual harassment etc. It is an abuse of power, deliberate and repeated. It can be planned and organised, or it may be unintentional. It may be perpetrated by individuals or by groups of pupils. Isolated instances of hurtful behaviour, teasing or arguments between individuals of equal power should not be seen as bullying.

4. What is bullying? an imbalance of power to repeatedly and intentionally cause emotional or physical harm to another person or group of people, below are examples of conduct considered as potential bullying:

- Physical violence such as hitting, pushing or spitting at another pupil.
- Interfering with another pupil's property, by stealing, hiding or damaging it.
- Using offensive names when addressing another pupil.
- It can be verbal – name-calling, threats, racial abuse, gender abuse, disability harassment.
- Teasing or spreading rumours about another pupil or his/her family.
- Belittling another pupil's abilities and achievements.
- Writing offensive notes or graffiti about another pupil.
- Excluding another pupil from a group activity.
- Ridiculing another pupil's appearance, way of speaking or personal mannerisms.
- Cyber-bullying through mobile 'phones, text messages, sending picture/video clips via mobile 'phone cameras, emails, chat rooms, instant messaging and websites.

The school recognises that although anyone can be bullied for almost any reason or difference, some students may be more vulnerable to bullying than others. Research has identified various types of bullying experienced by vulnerable groups. These include:

- Bullying related to race, religion or culture
- Bullying related to special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities
- Bullying related to being gifted or talented
- Bullying related to appearance or health conditions
- Bullying related to sexual orientation e.g. homophobic, transphobic.
- Bullying of young carers or looked-after children or otherwise related to home circumstances
- Sexist
- Other physical attributes (such as hair colour, or body shape).

5. Signs and symptoms

The following may suggest that a student has been bullied and that the situation warrants investigation:

- Unwillingness to attend school – truancy.
- Anxiety about travelling to and from school/avoiding regular travelling times.
- Underachievement. Clinging to adults.
- Loss of concentration /enthusiasm / interest in school/changed behaviour.
- Repeated non-specific reasons for surgery visits, headache/stomachache.
- Unexplained change in mood especially before returning to school after holidays/weekends.
- Physical signs of anxiety – stammering/nightmares/loss of appetite/nausea/withdrawal/becoming shy or nervous.

- Physical bruising/torn clothes.
- Loss of self-esteem/confidence/mood swings.
- Books torn or destroyed/missing possessions.
- Reluctance to say what is wrong.

6. Responsibilities of all members of our community

Each member of the school community has a role to play in helping to prevent bullying and in creating an atmosphere in which it is not allowed to develop.

The Responsibilities of All

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

The Responsibilities of Staff

Staff must act to prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation within the school (Equality Act 2010).

Our staff will:

- Foster in our pupil's 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 by using the staff intranet on-line form.
- 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.

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.

Anyone who becomes the target of bullies should 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.

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, try to ascertain the truth. And point out the implications of bullying, both for the children who are bullied and for the bullies themselves.

7. Preventative measures

We will achieve this by:

- promoting and maintaining an ethos which encourages consideration and respect for others, and which is firmly based on the values of St Benedict's School.
- educating students about the boundaries of appropriate behaviour towards others and addressing bullying and related issues in assemblies and the PSHEE/Citizenship programme.
- ensuring all staff experience quality CPD in being able identify those who are at risk of bullying and can respond appropriately.
- alerting adults who enter our school premises to know how to respond if they think they have witnessed bullying taking place or suspect someone is being bullied.
- ensuring effective supervision of locations within school where bullying is likely to occur and highlighting to students, with the support of parents, the importance of appropriate behaviour when travelling to and from school.
- ensuring that students, staff and parents are aware of school policy on the use of technologies both within school and outside school through the Acceptable Use Policy.
- liaising with other agencies as appropriate.
- encouraging a strong sense of belonging to school through participation in extracurricular activities.
- having clear procedures for responding to bullying, which are kept under regular review.

8. Who to tell? How to report?

- All staff are responsible for safeguarding young people.
- If another student is being unkind to you, tell an adult.

- If a young person reports unkind behaviour, listen to them. All unkind behaviour must be reported. See section 9.
- Report the information to the young person's form tutor or Senior Progress Leader.
- Form tutor, to provide pastoral care towards the young person reporting the information.
- Form tutor to liaise with the Senior Progress Leader.
- Follow section 9.

9. Procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour

If you suspect any member of our community is being bullied or witness bullying taking place, you must report the incident by filling out a 'Bullying Log' (located on the staff intranet as an on-line form) The on-line form will automatically notify the Senior Progress Leader for the year groups involved and will automatically record the incidents for review by E Coogan.

An investigation will take place and could be responded to in a variety of ways. We favour a Restorative Justice approach. This where perpetrator(s) and victim(s) meet in a safe and supervised environment to understand the human impact of their actions. Restorative Justice enables students affected by bullying, or other serious behavioural incidents, to communicate and agree on how the harm caused by their actions or done to them is to be repaired. When well-implemented, perpetrators learn to understand the consequences of their behaviour and take responsibility for repairing the harm. When this happens victims usually experience the perpetrator's commitment to reparation which means their fear of re-victimisation is reduced and they are more readily able to put the incident behind them. In most cases, we have found this approach to be successful.

In more serious cases we may:

- Contact parents/carers of all pupils concerned in the bullying incident.
- Apply sanctions in school e.g. they will be kept away from students at break and lunchtime for one week and excluded from non-curricular activities or another suitable punishment.
- Refer to relevant professionals e.g. EWO, Pastoral managers, Suffolk Education Services.
- Draw up a 'Contract of improved Conduct'. If the contract is broken, they could face Exclusion.
- Call them before the St Benedict's Governing Body, with parents present.
- Lose their place at St Benedict's.
- Inform the police

10. Procedures for parents

St Benedict's believes in working in partnership with students and parents. You can trust St Benedict's to act in the best interests of your child. Please feel free to make an appointment to discuss your child's progress at any time.

If you suspect that your child is being bullied, you should:

- Talk to your child and try to find out what the problem is.
- Contact the school and request an appointment to see your child's Senior Progress Leader.
- You will be spoken to by a member of staff within 24 hours of the first contact.

- We will discuss the problem with you and design a plan of action to suit the situation.

It is our intention to respond quickly and effectively to incidents of bullying using a restorative approach and/or sanctions where necessary to:

- support students who are bullying in recognising the seriousness of their behaviour and to offer support and counselling to help them to readjust their behaviour.
- safeguard and offer support and comfort to students who have been bullied and provide longer term support where necessary to reduce the likelihood of negative effects on their behaviour and self-esteem.
- address the emotional and behavioural needs of students who bully others to reduce the likelihood of repeated incidents of bullying.



Anti-Bullying Policy

Owner: Mrs E Coogan (Assistant Headteacher).

Reviewed: July 2026

Date for Review: July 2027