The Ellesmere Port
C of E College

Anti-Bullying Policy

Policy Information:

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Approved by Head of School:

Approved by Chair of Governors:

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Our Vision

To act justly, to love with mercy and to walk humbly with our God - Micah 6:8

At Ellesmere Port Church of England College we seek to build a community of faith where our students have the cultural capital to follow unlimited ideas and dreams. Above all else, we want our students to experience the fullness of life, where the sort of person they become is of paramount importance.

To **BE MORE** is to be a community which aspires to act justly in all situations; to be kind towards those inside and outside the College; and to be open to God's guidance in all areas of our lives.

Links with other policies

This Policy has obvious links with the wider safeguarding agenda and specifically all policies that make up the safeguarding suite of documents. It should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy. When ratifying or reviewing the policy, links should be made with the other relevant policies.

Principles

This policy attempts to ensure it is consistent with the College's Mission Statement: ***"To act justly, to love with mercy and to walk humbly with our God" (Micah 6:8)*** and our Trust motto: ***"Aspire not to have more but to be more"*** and ***Matthew 18:21, 22.***

"Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven."

It is important that all adults working with children understand that the nature of their work and the responsibilities related to it places them in a position of trust. This practice guidance provides clear advice on appropriate and safe behaviours for all adults working with children in paid or unpaid capacities, in all settings and in all contexts.

Moral Virtues

We believe that all pupils should be aware of the standards of behaviour expected at our college. These standards are underpinned by our moral virtues within our Christian context, and we expect all members of our college community to take responsibility for living these out on a daily basis. Positive relationships throughout The College are built on a set of shared virtues:

Justice - "Grant justice and do what is fair" Colossians 4:1

Definition: *Our College rules are fair and reasonable.*

Example: *Showing that you know when you need to stand up for what is correct and appropriate with the context of our moral virtues and Consistency Across the College.*

Humility - "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord" James 4:10

Definition: *we aim to ensure that everyone in our community has a place and a voice that will be heard.*

Example: *To celebrate all our achievements in a respectful manner.*

Respect - "Do to others as you would have them do to you" Luke 6:31

Definition: *treat others how you would wish to be treated yourself.*

Example: *Holding the door open for any member of our community.*

Courage - "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid" Joshua 1:9

Definition: *the quality of having strength in the face of difficulty.*

Example: *Being confident to express opinions and ideas within the College.*

Integrity - "The godly walk with integrity" Proverbs 20:7

Definition: *the quality of having strong moral virtues.*

Example: *Knowing that we should all try and do the right thing when faced with adversity.*

Compassion - "Clothe yourselves with compassion" Colossians 3:12

Definition: *the quality of having concern for others.*

Example: *Showing kindness and care for others within the College and our community.*

Honesty - "He delights in those that tell the truth" Proverbs 12:22

Definition: *the quality of being truthful.*

Example: *Telling the truth in all situations even when it is hard to do so.*

Gratitude - "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever" Psalm 107:2

Definition: *the quality of being thankful and showing appreciation.*

Example: *Saying please and thank you wherever possible.*

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Policy Aims

The policy reflects current guidance from the Department for Education (Preventing and tackling the bullying and harassment of school staff - GOV.UK

The policy aims to reduce bullying by:

- Ensuring that those connected with the college understand what the term 'bullying' means and that bullying will not be tolerated under any circumstances.
- Putting clear strategies in place for preventing and dealing with any behaviour deemed as bullying.
- Promoting a college ethos where bullying is regarded as unacceptable by everyone.
- Ensuring a safe and secure environment in which everyone is able to learn and work.
- Providing a transparent, easily understood system for responding to reported incidents of bullying.

The intention of this policy is that it will be used as a working document by the college community: staff, pupils and parents.

Introduction

The Anti-Bullying Policy aims to reflect the Christian ethos and moral virtues of the College.

The policy is also in line with the college's behaviour policy, which promotes the responsibility of all adults in the college to deal with behaviour, including bullying, and to educate pupils to behave responsibly. The policy also reflects the moral virtue of respect.

The anti-bullying policy draws from the college's mission statement which states we have 'care and compassion for each other'. It is expected that teachers use a 'bullying preventative' style of teaching which has a number of different outcomes for pupils:

- Treating ALL members of the community with respect
- NOT setting up victims
- Presenting good role models – using 'power' and 'authority' appropriately
- Explicitly stating that bullying is not acceptable under any circumstance
- Active process aimed at changing pupil attitudes through portraying our moral virtues
- Working together as a family to look out for each other – and not to see talking to adults as 'telling'
- Working together through a restorative justice process to resolve issues.

The policy is in line with the college's Behaviour and Safeguarding policies and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. The college is committed, through our strong Christian values to providing a caring and safe community within which pupils can thrive.

What is Bullying?

The government defines bullying as “behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally” (DfE 2017 Preventing and tackling bullying).

A one-off incident does not tend to be considered as a form of bullying. A characteristic of bullying is that in its different forms/behaviours, it happens repeatedly over a period of time.

Bullying is generally characterised by:

- Repetition: Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over an extended period of time.
- Intent: The perpetrator means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental.
- Targeting: Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.
- Power imbalance: Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations.

Bullying is, therefore:

- Deliberately hurtful
- Repeated, often over a period of time
- Difficult to defend against

Bullying can include:

TYPE OF BULLYING	DEFINITION
Emotional	Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
Physical	Hitting, kicking, pushing, taking another’s belongings, any use of violence
Prejudice-based and discriminatory, including: • Racial • Faith-based • Gendered (sexist) • Homophobic/biphobic • Transphobic • Disability-based • Sexist	Taunts, gestures, graffiti or physical abuse focused on a particular characteristic (e.g. gender, race, sexuality)
Sexual	Explicit sexual remarks, display of sexual material, sexual gestures, unwanted physical attention, comments about sexual reputation or performance, or inappropriate touching
Direct or indirect verbal	Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
Cyber-bullying	Bullying that takes place online, including the sharing of harmful content generated using AI, as well as the inappropriate use of social networking sites, messaging apps, online forums, and gaming platforms to intimidate, harass, humiliate, or target others.

Bullying can happen to anyone, and this policy is inclusive of the bullying of college staff, whether by pupils, parents/carers or other staff. (Members of the college workforce suffering from or concerned about bullying may also contact their trade union or professional association for support and advice).

The Equality Act became law in 2010. It covers everyone in Britain and protects people from discrimination, harassment and victimisation; there are nine protected characteristics, which are listed below:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment
4. Race
5. Religion or belief
6. Marriage or civil partnership
7. Sex
8. Sexual orientation
9. Pregnancy and maternity

Child on Child abuse

Children may be harmed by other children or young children. Staff may be aware of the harm caused by bullying and will use anti-bullying procedures where necessary. However, there will be occasions when a pupil's behaviour warrants a response under child protection rather than anti-bullying procedures. Staff will refer to the Colleges Safeguarding Policy and act accordingly.

The Ellesmere Port Church of England College will not tolerate Child on Child abuse in any form. The College have Anti-Bullying ambassadors who work with staff to support all members of the College. Pupils, parents and staff can report ant incidents of suspected bullying to Form Tutors, Learning Coaches, Heads of Learning and the Safeguarding team. All reported incidents will be fully investigated, with all parties informed throughout the investigation process.

This applies to incidents inside and outside the college premises (including incidents online). The safeguarding team holds records of all incidents of reported bullying and outcomes. Following any incident, the College will support all pupils involved to ensure they feel safe and comfortable in the College. All related sanctions will be applied in line with the College Behaviour and Safety policy. Annual training is delivered to all staff to support all adults to prevent and identify bullying issues.

Vulnerable Pupils

Some pupils are particularly vulnerable to bullying and may be severely affected by it, such as those with special educational needs or disabilities. Others may be particularly vulnerable because they are going through a personal or family crisis or suffering from a health problem.

There will also be a range of other local or individual factors that result in some children being more vulnerable and its impact than others. The impact of bullying can be severe because of the nature and extent of the bullying or because it is combined with other factors such as those mentioned above that also affect the social, mental, and emotional health of the pupil. All pupils are supported through EPC's pastoral system and 'Be More' curriculum.

Pupils are encouraged to report anything that makes them uncomfortable, no matter how 'small' they feel it might be.

The College's response will be:

- Proportionate
- Considered
- Supportive
- Decided on a case-by-case basis

The College has procedures in place to respond to any allegations or concerns regarding a child's safety or wellbeing.

These include clear processes for:

- Responding to a report
- Carrying out risk assessments, where appropriate, to help determine whether to: Manage the incident internally
    - Refer to early help
    - Refer to children's social care
    - Report to the police

Signs of bullying

Bullying can seriously damage a person's confidence and sense of self-worth, and the victim will often feel that they are at fault in some way. Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as:

- Unexplained bruises, scratches, cuts, bite marks
- Belongings repeatedly going missing
- Refuses to say why he/she is unhappy
- Distressed at the thought of going to college
- Refuses to go to college
- Reports aches and pains
- Frightened of walking to college alone
- Changes route to college
- Has started taking longer to get home from college
- Seems withdrawn/unhappy or in a world of his/her own
- Cries at bedtime
- Returns home with torn clothes or damaged college work
- Returns home hungry (lunch/snack money stolen)
- Asks for more money than usual or steals money (to pay off bully)
- Loses interest in college work or finds it harder to concentrate
- Refuses to go out to play or stops going to cubs/brownies in the evenings or at weekends

Key staff

All staff will take responsibility for dealing with any incidents of bullying. There is a clear line of responsibility and referral for dealing with incidents: The Form Tutor will be the member of staff initially responsible for dealing with incidents within their form and will discuss with their Head of Learning.

Should it be necessary, the Form Tutor will refer the matter to the Head of Learning who will then take over the responsibility. Should the matter still not be resolved, it will be referred to a member of the Senior Leadership Team – initially through the Line Management system.

Should the matter still not be resolved, this will then be referred to the Assistant Executive Head Teacher/Head of School and finally the
Executive Head Teacher/Head of School.

In curriculum areas, the pattern should be replicated – classroom teacher, HOD, and so on. The HOL should be kept informed by the HOD.

Occasionally, bullying is reported to staff, and the structure above may not be suitable. Heads of Learning should be alerted to this and discuss the actions with appropriate member of SLT.

Strategies for the prevention of bullying

We continue to develop a range of strategies to prevent bullying. Below are some recommended strategies which the college currently undertakes and is developing:

Staff Training
The college will ensure that all staff have received sufficient high-quality training to ensure that they are able to both identify cases of bullying and then provide appropriate support for all parties. Staff will be trained to understand the needs of their pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) pupils.

Supervision
Pupils supervised by staff at lunch and break. This includes Senior Members of Staff, Heads of Learning, Learning Coaches and TAs.

Corridors
Staff should be present and vigilant on corridors at lesson change over, and should greet their classes by the door as per the 'Consistency across the Classroom' protocol.

Consistency Across the College
Controlled entry and exit to classrooms, helps reduce opportunity for conflict on corridors e.g. pupils pushing each other, deliberately walking into each other, overcrowding etc.

Materials
Teachers are expected to ensure that there are enough materials for all pupils to use.

Punctuality to lessons
Staff are expected to arrive on time to lessons and be waiting on corridors to greet pupils. Most staff have their own classrooms, which enables this to happen.

Behaviour Policy
Staff are expected to follow the college's behaviour policy and use it as a working document.

Immediate Action
Members of staff to whom bullying incidents are reported should ensure that any incidents are either dealt with immediately by him /herself or passed on to the Head of Department or Head of Learning (dependent on the route)

Classroom management
Teachers are expected avoid the use of sarcasm and threats as a means of classroom management. Reference should be made to the staff 'code of conduct', also recognised as 'Safer Working Practices….'

Consistent sanctions
Teachers are expected to use sanctions in a consistent fashion, according to the college's behaviour

policy.

Individual recognition
The college's ethos values effort and achievement relative to individuals, not only high achievement. This is illustrated in the college's annual Awards Evening, as well as achievement assemblies each Learning Programme.

Awareness and familiarity with policy
All stakeholders including staff, pupils, parents and governors should be aware of the policy, its purpose as a working document, and how to deal with bullying should it arise.

Assertiveness Training/self-esteem work/ restorative justice for bullied pupils.
This will often be undertaken by the pastoral team after referral from HOL or via GAS or AIM meetings.

Mobile Phone Policy
EPC has a mobile phone policy which requires all mobile phones to be secured in a locking pouch throughout the school day. This approach ensures that pupils remain focused on learning, reduces distractions, supports positive behaviour, and encourages meaningful face-to-face interactions. The policy helps create a calm and purposeful environment where pupils can fully engage in lessons, socialise positively during breaks, and develop healthy habits around technology use. Staff and pupils work together to promote the benefits of a mobile phone free school, ensuring that learning, wellbeing, and respectful relationships are at the heart of the college community.

Anti-Bullying Ambassadors/Be Kind Ambassadors
Pupils throughout the college support their peers through Anti-Bullying and Be Kind Ambassador roles. Anti- bullying and Be Kind Ambassadors offer support to their peers and are a key link between pupils and pastoral staff.

ELSA Support
This is offered to some vulnerable pupils as an extra form of emotional support.

Tackling bullying through the curriculum

Many subject areas could be used to promote anti-bullying values and co-operative behaviour.

For example:

- making direct reference to the behaviour of a group illustrated by an incident in history, current affairs or fictional account.
- Plays, poetry and fiction used as a basis for discussion
- Artwork, creative writing, role-play, and drama
- Most subjects allow for group tasks, experiments or team building
- Drama can be used in assemblies for promoting anti-bullying behaviour

PSHE

- Pupils explore different forms of bullying and its effects.
- Pupils explore healthy relationships.
- Pupils consider the role played by all in the bullying process by considering responsibilities of the whole community in preventing and tackling bullying.
- Pupils are made aware of where to go for help if they are a victim or witness of bullying, as well as developing an understanding of the need for rules and rights.
- Pupils explore what can be done to stamp out bullying, encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviour and to challenge the concept of bullying.
- This is taught throughout the Key Stages, exploring text and cyber bullying and how to tackle it.

- Lessons involve scenarios, drama, discussion, and reflection.
- Assemblies led by SLT / HOLs. Assemblies held by external agencies

Teaching styles that help reduce bullying

College staff should consider the possible influence of their own behaviour towards pupils.

Bullying preventative teaching:

- Treating pupils with respect.
- NOT setting up victims. E.g. sitting a child near a student who you are aware could intimidate him /her.
- Presenting good role models – using power and authority appropriately.
- Explicitly stating that bullying is NOT acceptable.

Reporting Bullying

Pupils often report bullying. They rarely keep it to themselves, no matter how worried they may feel about being found out they have told someone, or how insignificant they may feel itis, or how much they may be perceived by others as being weak.

It is only when staff are told about the bullying that the college can act to stop it and support the victim.

The college has a clear reporting system. Pupils at EPC usually either:

a) Tell a trusted adult in college or
b) Tell their Form Tutor, Head of Learning or Learning Coach.
c) Tell an Anti-Bullying or Be Kind Ambassador
d) “Tell us” Button on the school website

Pupils should tell an adult as soon as it happens. They are encouraged to do so and the culture and ethos at the college leads pupils to understand that this is something which will not be tolerated.

The Form Tutor, Head of Learning or Learning Coach is usually the main point of contact at first. If pupils decide to tell another adult in college, the concern will be shared as soon as possible with the Form Tutor/Learning Coach/HOL. One of these named adults will discuss the problem with the child.

If it is decided the issue is of a bullying nature, the pupil will be asked to complete a statement where s/he will write down the details of the bullying incident.

The incident will be referred immediately to the pupil’s **Head of Learning.**

The Head of Learning will then investigate the concern, and if necessary, take appropriate action. This may include sanctions as listed in the Behaviour Policy and E Safety Policies, depending on the nature of the behaviour. It may include parental contact, detentions, placement in the Emmaus Centre, restorative intervention, SLT intervention, segregation at break and lunch or exclusion. The decision on the sanctions will be made by the HOL/SLT/Executive Head Teacher/Head of School, and parents of the perpetrator will be informed.

Escalation

The Head of Learning will contact the parents of both parties and put in place measures to support the victim and solve the problem with the perpetrator. This may involve input from the Pastoral teams.

Should the bullying continue, the Head of Learning may refer the incidents to their Line manager and again sanctions will be considered. If the bullying still persists, it may be referred to the Executive Head Teacher/Head of School.

Parents reporting bullying

Parents may contact college, often in some distress, to report that their child has been bullied. Their concerns will be taken seriously. Reception is the first contact for parents telephoning college. Therefore, all staff should be familiar with the policy. Parents contacting the college will be referred to the Head of Learning for the relevant Year group.

Good practice includes:

- Recognising that the parent may be angry or upset.
- Keeping an open mind – bullying may be difficult to detect, so lack of staff awareness does not mean bullying has not occurred.
- Remaining calm and understanding.
- Making clear that the college does care and that something will be done, explaining the college policy and making sure that procedures are followed.

When a case is referred to a Head of Learning, the member of staff should:

- Ask for details and record the information.
- Make a further appointment to explain actions and find out if it has stopped.
- Follow up with staff to ensure that appropriate action has been taken.
- Ensure that college policy has been implemented.

Many of the same points apply when the college has to tell parents that their child has been involved in bullying. Parents are more likely to respond positively to a calm approach, which follows the agreed guidelines of an anti-bullying policy with which they are familiar.

Bullying outside of college premises

As per Department of Further Education Guidance 2017, EPC will look into the incidents of bullying outside of the college in accordance with this policy. This can include travel to and from college whilst in college uniform, sanctions may follow, in line with the College's Behaviour Policy.

Recording bullying

All records relating to bullying incidents will be stored electronically using the college safeguarding software and on the individual's pupil file. Sanctions for incidents will be recorded on the pupil's records.

The Level 3 Behaviour Form includes a category of 'bullying' to be filled in by relevant middle or senior manager.

Responding to bullying

The fundamental aim of the policy is to work towards the prevention of bullying, rather than reacting to incidents of bullying with a list of sanctions. Although bullying needs to be stopped, punishment is rarely

the most effective method of responding to pupils who bully others.

Therefore, it is important that the college considers a range of responses to bullying and considers each incident individually.

Parents should be involved in the process of responding to bullying incidents. Early communication is recommended in order to deal with the problem as soon as possible.

Involving Parents

Involving parents is often a key to success or failure in anti-bullying initiatives. Though not always apparent, parental approval is important to children of all ages. The majority of parents support anti-bullying measures and are keen to participate. Consultation is important, helping create an ethos in which positive behaviour is encouraged, and bullying considered unacceptable.

Useful approaches include

Monitoring and evaluation

The policy will be updated again in September 2026 and will involve all pupils, staff and parents. The policy will then be monitored by key staff i.e. Heads of Learning/ SLT. Key staff will monitor the effectiveness of the policy and will consider:

- Regular consultation and communication (policy available on website).
- Advising parents about possible consequences of bringing valuable items to college (through parental handbooks).
- The views of parents, pupils and staff
- The process for reporting bullying
- The number of pupils reporting bullying and types of incidents; the system of storing records via Synergy and safeguarding records.

The effectiveness of the policy will be evaluated by the Senior Management Team. After a whole year, the possible effects might include:

- The range of actions taken when dealing with bullying Preventative measures
- Staff more vigilant and responsive to bullying
- Fewer pupils report being bullied
- More pupils say they would not join in bullying someone else
- More pupils being able to name a member of staff they would speak to if they were being bullied or if they saw bullying taking place.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Specialist organisations to support the anti-bullying policy

The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) (www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk): Founded in 2002 by NSPCC and National Children's Bureau, the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) brings together over 100 organisations into one network to develop and share good practice across the whole range of bullying issues.

Beat bullying (www.beatbullying.org): A bullying prevention charity with an emphasis on working directly with children and young people. In addition to lesson plans and resources for Parent/Carers, Beat bullying have developed the Cyber mentors peer support programme for young people affected by cyber-bullying.

Kidscape (www.kidscape.org.uk): Charity established to prevent bullying and promote child protection providing advice for young people, professionals and Parent/Carers about different types of bullying and how to tackle it. They also offer specialist training and support for college staff, and assertiveness training for young people. Restorative Justice Council: Includes best practice guidance for practitioners 2011.

Cyber-bullying: ChildNet International (www.childnet.com): Specialist resources for young people to raise awareness of online safety and how to protect themselves.

Appendix 2 - Factors which influence children in becoming bullies or victims

Children who Bully

Home

- Little status gained – little verbal interaction physical/verbal aggression features
- Parent models bullying behaviour – few rewards/praise
- Limited interest in the child
- Negative sanctions

Individual

- Low self-esteem
- Low academic attainments
- Charisma/dominance
- Few positive skills

College

- No rules/boundaries
- Intervention
- No policy re unacceptability
- Models of teachers bullying – covert support
- Opportunities to bully
- Geography of the college
- Lack of supervision
- Poor communication with parents

Children who are Victims

Home

- Possibly overprotective- not allowing independence – non-assertive role models
- Lack awareness about growing up
- Lack of “street cred” – poor appearance

Individual

- Minor disabilities – clumsiness – physical features – lack of assertion – sensitivity, few friends – quiet – problems making retaining friendships
- Low self-esteem – few attributes

College

- No acknowledgement – no security
- No policy – weak pastoral system
- No communication with parents

Appendix 3 - Effects and Consequences of Bullying

Bullying is frequently an aggressive and abusive activity, which is potentially very harmful and dangerous. There is often a need to impress upon members of the college community the serious consequences of letting bullying continue without taking any action.

These effects can be seen at any or all of the following levels: Individual level – Safety and happiness of pupils

- lives are made miserable – injury
- loss of self-confidence – low self-esteem increasingly
- isolated as others “move away”
- poor self-esteem – self blame
- truancy
- poor concentration affects learning and levels of achievement
- subject options choice to avoid other children
- later adult disturbance/depression, death

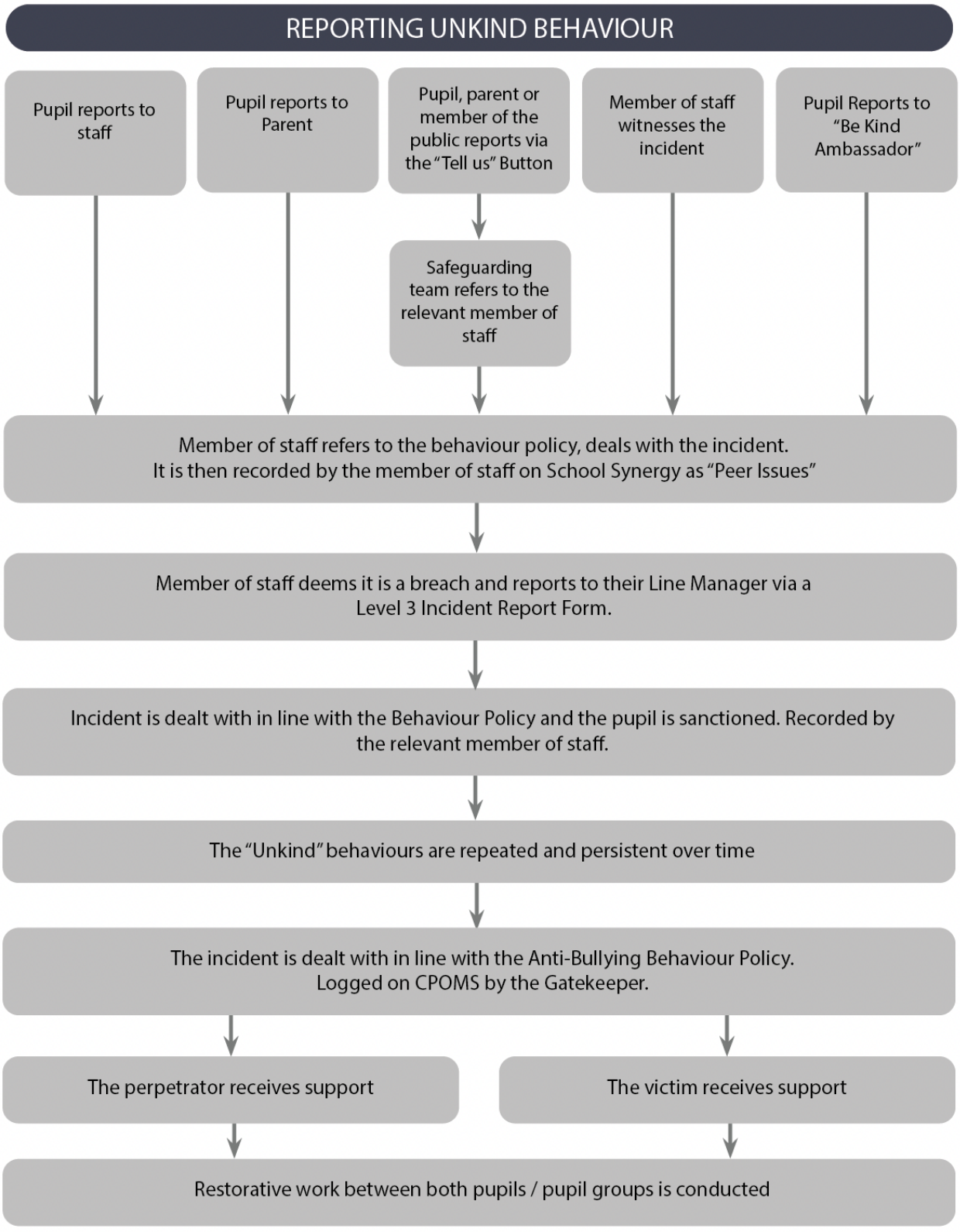
Classroom level

- dynamics of the class group can maintain or prevent bullying
- bystanders learn that bullying works – they learn “putdowns” and ways of exerting power “ripple effects”
- disruptions and unease within the classroom

Systems level

- 20% of those being bullied take time off because of it
- bullying results in a reputation for being an ineffective, uncaring college a college that parents would not opt to send their children to
- provides a poor model of behaviour that affects the ethos of the college

Appendix 4 – Flow chart for follow up of a report of bully



Appendix 5 - DfE advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying

Advice for Parents and carers on cyberbullying

Who is this advice for?

This advice is for parents and carer about cyberbullying. It provides advice and information about how they can protect their child from cyberbullying and how to tackle it if it happens.

Overview

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using technology. Whether on social media sites, through a mobile phone, or gaming sites, the effects can be devastating for the young person involved. There are ways to help prevent a child from being cyberbullied and to help them cope and stop the bullying if it does happen.

Parents and carers need to be aware that most children have been involved in cyberbullying in some way, either as a victim, perpetrator, or bystander. By its very nature, cyberbullying tends to involve a number of online bystander's and can quickly spiral out of control. Children and young people who bully others online do not need to be physically stronger and their methods can be often hidden and subtle.

Cyberbullying can also involve adults, even though technology has provided wonderful opportunities for both teaching and learning. It has led to some teachers becoming the victims of internet messaging that undermines and ridicules them. It is important that parents make clear that thus is not acceptable behaviour and lead by example. What was once a conversation at the school gate between small groups of parents and carers can now become a conversation with perhaps hundreds of “friends” on social networking sites, include comments that are recorded permanently, with a large audience and easily shared.

Whilst parents and carers have the right to be critical of decisions made by the school, or even individual staff members, they should raise concerns in an appropriate way and nor become abusive, or libellous. Open conversations on social networking sites are not private and can be easily reported to school staff, even if it was not the intention for views to be shared directly.

Artificial Intelligence

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Bard. EPC recognises that AI has many uses to help pupils learn, but may also have the potential to be used to bully others. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real. EPC will treat any use of AI to bully pupils in line with our anti-bullying and behaviour policies.

Social Networking

Young people routinely access social media and much of their social lives are conducted online. This can create a false sense of security; for example, chatting online feels different from chatting face to face. It can be easier to say and reveal things that would not be said face to face; be cruel, aggressive, or flirtatious. It is important for young people to remember that there are offline consequences to online behaviour.

Comments intended to be funny can often be misinterpreted online whereas if it is said face to face, they could be acceptable as facial expressions, body language, tone of voice and context would all help to ensure that comments are taken the right way. This is not the case online. We also know that

increasingly younger children are signing up to social network sites and may not have the maturity to handle their online identity in a safe and responsible way

Social networking can increase existing social pressure and reinforce a sense of isolation; for instance, by people purposefully not liking a young person's status update or photo so they seem unpopular, or by excluding them from group chats. Online bullying often involves a large audience, and this increases the pressure.

Parents and carers need to understand the way young people communicate with others, and the potential risks. Asking their child simply not to use technology is not a realistic way to prevent cyberbullying.

Internet matters provide an overview of cyber-bullying in more detail and NSPCC advice on cyberbullying prevention is helpful.

Parents and carers have a challenging job. They need to know what their children are doing online and also help them to do it in a safe way. With technology changing on a day-to-day basis, the best to stay informed is for parents to stay involved. Think you know provides helpful tips on letting your child teach you.

Set boundaries

A good way to supervise children's internet access and set boundaries and what they can and cannot do online is to create an agreement with them. If a child breaks the rules, restrict internet access for an agreed period of time. provides helpful tips on agreeing and setting boundaries.

Ensure you use the privacy settings, parental controls and inbuilt internet safety features provided by the major internet service providers. The UK Safer Internet Centre has guides for parental controls for parents and carers experiencing any internet safety issues with their children. The Parent Zone provides a national helpline service at - Parent Zone

Being involved and talking to children

Social networks have a minimum age restriction, usually age thirteen. Parents should talk to their children about the reasons behind the age restriction. Accessing such sites too early can expose children to unnecessary bullying.

It is also important to ensure children and young people feel comfortable about telling their parents things that have happened online. Talking to their children will help parents understand the way in which they are using the internet, social media and their mobile phone. Talking to children about responsible behaviour is important as sometimes children who are victims of cyberbullying may also be involved in cyberbullying others. Ensure they know they can go and talk to and adult or parent if they are being bullied or need support. How parents talk to their children will depend on their age. Childnet gives more detailed information about talking to your child and antibully pro provides practical advice for parents.

USEFUL RESOUCES

Getting offensive content taken down

If online content is upsetting and inappropriate, and the person or persons responsible are known, you need to ensure they understand why the material is unacceptable or offensive and request they remove it.

If the person responsible has not been identified or refuses to take down the material, you should contact the social networking site directly and make a report and request the content is taken down. The material posted may be in breach of the service providers terms and conditions of use and can therefore be removed.

Some service providers will not accept complaints lodged by a third party. In cases of mobile phone abuse,

where the person being bullied is receiving malicious calls and messages, the account holder will need to contact the provider directly.

Before you contact a web service provider, it is important to be clear about where the content is, for example by taking a screen shot of the material that includes the web address, If you are requesting that someone takes down material that is not illegal, be clear to pint out how it breaks the sites terms and conditions. Where you suspect that the material is illegal, you should contact the police directly.

NSPCC Netware: Your guide to the social network your kids use- Keeping children safe online | NSPCC

Links to other policies

This Policy will be read in conjunction with other policies regarding the safety and welfare of children.

These together make up the suite of policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in this college.

The policies listed below are all available on the website:

- Anti-Bullying policy
- Attendance and Punctuality Policy
- Behaviour policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- First Aid Policy
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Managing allegations against staff Policy
- Relationships and Sex Education
- Safer Recruitment
- Staff Conduct Policy
- Trust Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy