



## Anti-Bullying Policy

This Policy has regard to:

- DCSF Guidance 'Safe to learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools' 2007
- DCSF Guidance 'Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in Education' 2007
- St Bede's School Rules
- St Bede's School Behaviour Policy
- St Bede's Visit and off-site Activities Policy

## Aims and Objectives

The School takes great pride in its friendly atmosphere and the sympathy, which all members of the School (both staff and students) show towards each other. This considerate behaviour is encouraged at all times. The fact that our students come from a variety of countries, cultures and backgrounds is undoubtedly a help, since it makes it so much more difficult for individuals to feel that they are an outsider. Those in the community realise that everyone is different (not better or worse).

The School is home to many of our students for the majority of the year and it is imperative that everyone should feel comfortable and at ease in their 'home'. The School must be a safe, friendly and secure place to each individual, and this cannot be so for any individual who is in any way bullied.

The School's objective is to promote and encourage the maintenance of a friendly atmosphere and to ensure that the boarders feel at home.

Bullying is therefore viewed as one of the most serious, if not the most serious, form of anti-social behaviour. Our aim is to eradicate it in all its forms and, where it does exist, to deal with it promptly and effectively.

### What is bullying?

Bullying is not necessarily physical. It need not necessarily be carried out by older/bigger people towards someone who is younger/smaller. Bullies can operate alone or in groups.

Bullying is perhaps best defined as the deliberate act of causing another person to be unhappy.

It can be serious enough to cause permanent psychological damage; in some cases it has led to suicide.

Bullying may include one or more of the following kinds of comments or remarks:

- Racial
- Religious
- Cultural
- Sexual or sexist
- Homophobic
- Reference to disability

Unkind comments of all kinds can be a form of bullying; a threatening look can be sufficient to intimidate. A very common form and effect of bullying is the exclusion of individuals from social groups so that they feel rejected, isolated and unhappy. Any 'initiation ceremony' intended to

cause pain, anxiety or humiliation would be bullying behaviour. Text messages, e-mail and the posting of messages on the internet can all be used to bully individuals (see also 'Cyber-bullying', below).

### Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying can be defined as the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else. This type of bullying is often likely to take place out of school but it can have a profound effect on the school life of students who are involved. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006) gives to schools the power to regulate the conduct of students when they are off-site, or not under the control of a member of staff. The School will therefore apply its Anti-Bullying Policy and The School Rules whether bullying took place at school or elsewhere.

### How can we detect bullying?

Though we would hope to be able to observe and detect any physical outcomes or social problems that might arise, bullying is often invisible and many victims are too frightened or too worried to come forward.

We hope that our students will have enough confidence in the adults (perhaps via Peer Mentors Prefects and other senior students) in the establishment to come and tell at least one of them about their worries. The best person is probably the student's tutor or Housemaster/Housemistress, but anyone will do, since all staff will handle the problem delicately and will ensure that the correct action is taken.

We also hope that parents, if they should hear or suspect that there is a problem, will immediately contact us and let us know. Again the student's Housemaster/Housemistress is the best contact in the first instance.

### Raising awareness amongst students

It is very important that it is clear to everyone what bullying is. The School does this through our PSHE programme; other lessons, activities and projects; assemblies, Chapels and Sunday Meetings; Peer Mentors; House and School Prefects; tutorials; the School Council; Anti-bullying Week initiatives; and on-going informal situations). Students are told what to do about it, who to tell and what the outcomes will be.

### How will the School deal with occurrences of bullying?

When it has been established that bullying has taken place, it is very often sufficient to explain carefully to the person/persons who have been acting unkindly just what they have been doing and the effect that it has had. In most cases those who bully are unaware of the effect that their behaviour has. They very often become carried away with the fun of being part of a (possibly) loud and boisterous social group and may be blind to, or only partially aware of, the effect they have on others. When they become aware of the problem they are eager to put things right.

Therefore the School acts as follows:

- If a member of staff comes across an act of bullying or suspected bullying, it is reported to the relevant housemaster or housemistress who will work with the Second Master to resolve the situation.
- Those involved in the anti-social behaviour are made thoroughly aware of what they have been doing, and the effects that it has had. They are invited to suggest how things can be improved and to spread the message to anyone else that they feel ought to hear it. They are told that an extremely dim view would be taken of any recurrence since this would clearly be a conscious and deliberate act. Most young people who have behaved unkindly feel at this stage that they must apologise to the victim; this is encouraged.
- The victim is told that the matter has been dealt with and that the distressing behaviour should now stop. They are told that they must report any recurrence at once.
- The staff involved then record and monitor the situation discreetly to make sure that the unkind behaviour does not start up again. There is at least one further meeting with the parties concerned to check that all is now well.

### Recording

Bullying is recorded, at all stages, together with the action taken in the disciplinary section of the school's MIS.

### Repeated offences

In cases where there is callousness about the bullying which causes the bully (or bullies) to continue even though they have been made thoroughly aware of what they are doing and the effect that it is having, then this is regarded with the utmost seriousness.

- The Headmaster will see any such offenders and make it clear to them that they will no longer be welcome in the School if such behaviour does not stop at once.
- Students who continue, after clear warnings, to be knowingly unkind to other people are liable to be required to leave the School.

### Raising awareness / staff training

The School takes part annually in 'Anti-bullying Week'. Awareness is raised by means of staff meetings, house meetings, tutorials, chapels, a poster campaign and information on the desktop of the School's computers.

New staff are inducted into the School's safeguarding and anti-bullying procedures on arrival. This training is refreshed every two years.

### Monitoring and review

This Policy will be reviewed every 2 years or sooner if deemed necessary or if relevant new guidance must be taken into account.