



Grays Convent

HIGH SCHOOL

Anti-Bullying Policy

This Policy was adopted by the Governing Body September 2022

This Policy will be reviewed in 2024

Mission Statement

At Grays Convent we recognise the value of each individual as a gift from God to the world. We are a Catholic school founded by the La Sainte Union Sisters and our ethos is one of unity, prayer, worship, service and work. We strive to follow the example of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary by enabling learning to take place in a caring and accepting community. We are blessed by Jesus the Good Shepherd, try to follow him in everything that we do, and in doing so make the most of our God given talents. We are one with God.

Aims:

At Grays Convent we are committed to ensuring that our pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. We believe this is a basic human right.

Bullying is at odds with our Mission Statement and undermines our school community. It is unacceptable, anti social behaviour which will not be tolerated as it threatens the dignity of the individual in our school.

Definitions of Bullying

- ***Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can happen face to face or through cyberspace. (Anti bullying alliance)***

Bullying behaviour can be defined as an action, or number of repeated actions, causing harm to people or relationships. This behaviour could be intentional or unintentional and may be on-going.

The definition equally encompasses physical or non-physical actions, therefore the harm could be physical, emotional, or both.

A paper for the Office of the Children's Commissioner (2006) outlined four key characteristics:

- repetitive and persistent
- intentionally harmful
- involving an imbalance of power
- causing feelings of distress, fear, loneliness or lack of confidence

A research review for the NSPCC produced a useful definition for the five essential components of bullying being:

1. there is an intention to harm e.g. a person teasing another with the intention of deliberately upsetting them
2. there is a harmful outcome: a person or persons are hurt emotionally or physically
3. the act can be direct or indirect e.g. it could involve direct aggression such as kicking someone or it could be an indirect act such as spreading rumours via Facebook
4. there is usually repetition from the perpetrator. However, for vulnerable pupils in the school community, who may experience bullying, the repetition may be the repeat of the act by several individuals or groups of people
5. there is unequal power. A person or several persons who are (perceived as) more powerful due to, for example, their age or physical strength or size will abuse their power by bullying.

Bullying is:

- deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves

Bullying can be:

- Emotional – being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
- physical - (hitting, punching, kicking, theft, threatening or intimidating behaviour, demanding money)
- verbal and non verbal abuse - (name calling, insulting or derogatory comments including staring, abusive gestures and sounds. sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing)
- Racist – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic – because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- indirect - (spreading false rumours, malicious gossip, deliberately excluding someone from social groups and encouraging others to do the same)
- cyber – all areas of internet, such as email and internet chat room misuse including menacing or upsetting responses in a web-based chat room; using defamatory blogs, personal websites and online personal polling sites, sending threatening or abusive messages via E-mail; Mobile threats by text messaging and calls. sending unwelcome text messages that are threatening or cause discomfort; picture/video clips bullying via mobile phone cameras, ‘happy slapping’; sending silent calls or abusive messages via mobile phones; Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities,
- Disability/SEN – because of, or focusing on a disability or special educational need.
- Home circumstance – targeting individuals who are looked after children or because of a particular home circumstance.

Some forms of bullying are attacks not only on the individual but also on the group to which the person belongs.

The Keeping Children safe in Education document released in September 2018 identifies bullying (including cyberbullying) as a form of peer on peer abuse.

Signs and Symptoms:

A victim may indicate by **signs** or Behaviour that she is being bullied. These may include:

- reluctance to attend school
- unwillingness to travel on the school bus/public transport
- truancy from specific lessons
- damage to clothing or possessions
- ‘losing’ more items than usual
- unexplained bruises/swellings
- deterioration of school work/academic performance
- being afraid to use the Internet
- becoming jittery about receiving text messages
- unkempt uniform
- bullying towards siblings
- taking money without permission

Symptoms may include:

- loss of appetite
- headaches
- stomach aches
- stammering
- sudden changes in behaviour
- lack of confidence
- signs of depression
- nervous/edginess
- difficulty in concentration
- lack of motivation to complete work

These are examples but this list is not exhaustive

At Grays Convent we will always challenge (within and outside of school):

- racial harassment and racist bullying
- bullying because of a pupil's religious, cultural or social background
- bullying because of a pupil's gender or sexual orientation, including the use of homophobic language and bullying of transgender pupils
- bullying of pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities
- bullying because of pupil's appearance or abilities
- bullying because of pregnancy or maternity leave

NOTE: it is worth mentioning that sometimes girls break up with friends and there can be arguments and name calling. At Grays Convent our Pastoral Team will work with students who are experiencing friendship issues and try to support them working through them. However, although upsetting, these disagreements are normal and usually pass after a few days. This is not bullying.

For this reason the school adopts the STOP (several times on purpose) motto towards identifying bullying. If the name calling continues overtime and escalates into a more serious situation it will be treated as bullying and will be dealt with accordingly.

The purpose of the policy:

This policy is a statement of how courteous and positive relationships should be nurtured and encouraged throughout our school community. It should ensure a shared understanding of bullying behaviours and develop a consistent approach to tackling bullying whenever it occurs.

During tutor time, PSHEC lessons, year assemblies and whole school assemblies' positive relationships are reinforced, and the anti-bullying message is reflected throughout the taught curriculum. Additionally Grays Convent marks Anti-Bullying Week each year with special assemblies and other events.

All teaching and support staff must be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly in accordance with the School's Policy.

For example: changes in pupil's behaviour such as shyness, nervousness, feigning illness or unusual absences – or changes in work patterns such as lack of concentration or truancy could be indicators of bullying taking place.

Everyone within the school is expected to:

- Act in a respectful and supportive way towards one another (See Grays Convent Code of Conduct 'Respect Yourself, respect others').

The Headteacher has the responsibility of drawing up anti bullying procedures, and to bring these procedures to the attention of staff, parents and pupils.

The following steps may be taken when dealing with incidents:

- if bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached
- a clear account of the incident will be recorded and given to Head of Year and, where appropriate, a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- form tutors and the pupils subject teachers will be informed, where appropriate,
- parents (of both victims and perpetrators) will be kept informed
- sanctions will be used as appropriate and in consultation with all involved

Pupils are expected to:

- report all incidents of bullying (to an Anti-Bullying Ambassador, a peer mentor, the Pastoral Manager, the School Chaplain or a teacher of their own choice) without fear of repercussion.
- report suspected incidents that victims might be afraid to report.
- provide positive support for each other and seek help to ensure that everyone feels safe, and nobody feels excluded or afraid in school.

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

- an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a teacher/ member of staff of their choice.
 - having their statements recorded.
- continuous support from Anti-Bullying ambassadors, Form Tutor, Head of Year, Assistant Headteacher, Chaplain, Counsellor (as appropriate) in restoring their self-esteem and confidence

At Grays Convent we believe it is also important to help any pupil who has demonstrated bullying behaviour by:

- discussing their involvement in incidents.
- establishing the wrong doing and the need to change.
- informing parents/carers to help change their child's attitude.

- offering practical support, such as Anger Management, to teach them strategies for dealing with aggressive or intimidating behaviour

The following sanctions/disciplinary steps could be taken when a pupil has been involved in bullying:

- official warnings – recorded by teacher
- disciplinary meeting with Head of Year
- detention
- letter to parents
- isolation within the School Day
- disciplinary meeting with Senior Leader
- fixed term exclusion
- meeting with the Governing Body
- permanent exclusion

Parents can help by:

- supporting our anti-bullying policy and procedures.
- encouraging their children to be positive members of the School Community and the wider world.
- informing the school of any concerns that their child might be experiencing bullying or is involved in some other way.
- Keeping any evidence of bullying behaviour their child might have experienced (for example screen shots of comments on social media)
- helping to foster positive relationships and an anti-bullying culture outside of school.

The Legal Framework

- The Education Act 2002 Section 175 placed a legal duty on maintained schools and Local Authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 states that maintained schools **must** have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. Some schools choose to include this information in an anti-bullying policy, whilst others include it in their behaviour policy. These measures **must** be communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents. The head teacher **must** follow through and adopt the policy and all students, parents and teachers should be notified of it once it has been decided.

Some incidents of bullying may also be a child protection issue. A bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection issue under the Children Act 1989 when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. These concerns **must** be reported to the member of staff in school responsible for child protection and then reported to the local authority's children's social services. As a last resort, the school may report a bullying issue to the police; particularly if staff feel that the nature of the bullying contravenes the law and other measures have been unsuccessful in preventing its recurrence.

- Under the Public Sector Equality Duty of the Equality Act 2010, schools and childcare providers must take steps to prevent and respond to discriminatory language.
- Schools have the powers to intervene in bullying incidents outside of the school ground including on home-to-school transport, in the community and online.

- Most bullying incidents are not crimes. But some types of bullying are illegal and should be reported to the police. This includes bullying that involves violence or assault; theft; harassment and intimidation over a period of time including calling someone names or threatening them, making abusive phone calls, and sending abusive emails or text messages (one incident is not normally enough to get a conviction); and anything involving hate crimes.
- Some cyberbullying activities could be criminal offences under a range of different laws, including the **Malicious Communications Act 1988** and the **Protection from Harassment Act 1997**. There have been some instances of such prosecutions in the UK.

Bullying in light of Covid 19

Bullying, in all its forms is always dealt with, however, since many members of our school community may have been seriously affected by the pandemic, any bullying linked to it will be likely to have an even greater impact on the mental wellbeing of the victim.

Hence the following forms of bullying may result in exclusion from school:

- Sharing insults linked to the pandemic
- Accusing an individual of having the virus
- 'Joking' about the effects of the virus
- Deliberately increasing the risk of infection to a targeted individual in any way

Responding to Bullying

Grays Convent School adopts a three-stage approach to dealing with bullying:

Stage 1: Creating a safe learning environment and anti-bullying culture

The first stage is on-going, and involves measures designed to encourage pupils to behave positively towards one another, thereby discouraging bullying.

These measures include:

- educating pupils to understand what bullying is (as well as what it isn't) and its impact on others ();
- the use of Anti-bullying ambassadors & peer mentors;
- pupil supervision at non-lesson times (including duty staff, prefects and midday supervisors);
- providing short term safe places for vulnerable pupils to go at break times and lunchtimes e.g. Inclusion room whilst incidents are investigated/ dealt with;
- supervision of corridors between lessons;
- opportunities for pupils to discuss bullying issues e.g. during tutor Period or a PSHEC lessons;
- the sharing of information during assemblies by form groups, HOY, external speakers / drama groups.
- the teachings of Jesus (through form prayer, assemblies, masses and RE lessons as well as displays around the school) which encourage the pupils to follow his example of love, to think of others and to work together for the common good.

Stage 2: If bullying occurs: The Restorative Approach

This approach encourages:

- the reporting of incidents (to an Anti-Bullying ambassador, a peer mentor, the Pastoral Manager or any other member of staff) and by reducing the victims' anxieties about repercussions.
- the education of the perpetrators, by increasing their understanding of the difficulties caused by bullying.
- the perpetrators to take responsibility for their actions. This could include a reflective process and a 'bullying warning' (i.e. that their behaviour is identified as bullying behaviour or is bullying, that it will be recorded and that there should be no further incidents or repercussions).
- the monitoring of the situation (in the first instance).
- working closely with parents and the victim to discuss if any action should be taken.

It may be appropriate to hold a Restorative Justice meeting with all those involved (should all parties agree to the meeting). This might mean:

- ❖ asking pupils, staff and parents to share their views within a meeting with a member of staff who would ensure that all participants were able to say how they had been affected by the bullying behaviour and what needed to change.
- ❖ a contract written between the pupils.
- ❖ a series of meetings to ensure that the contract was working and that problems had not re-emerged.

Stage 3: If those involved in bullying do not respond to the Restorative Approach

If those involved do not keep to the agreements made following a bullying warning or at a Restorative Justice Meeting, or repeat bullying behaviour towards other individuals, the matter will be treated as defiance.

The school would then use a range of sanctions which may include:

- loss of break time/lunchtime;
- after school detentions;
- internal exclusion or, in extreme cases, fixed term suspension or permanent exclusion.

Any pupil who has shown bullying behaviour will be supported by:

- discussing their involvement in incidents
- establishing the wrong doing and the need to change
- informing parents/carers to help change their child's attitude
- practical support such as Anger Management to teach strategies for dealing with aggressive or intimidating behaviour
- support from Anti-bullying ambassadors, Peer Mentor, Form Tutor, Pastoral Manager, Head of Year, Assistant Head teacher, School Chaplain, Counsellor (as appropriate)

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

- continuous support from Anti-bullying ambassadors, Peer Mentor, Form Tutor, Pastoral Manager, Head of Year, Assistant Head teacher, School Chaplain, Counsellor (as appropriate)
- in restoring their self-esteem / confidence

Monitoring and Review:

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Behaviour and Discipline Policy with regard to incidents of bullying which occur outside of school.

The Anti-Bullying Policy will be reviewed bi-annually.

The Headteacher will report to the Governing Body on the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy annually in the Autumn Term. The Policy will be reviewed every two years.

Supporting Organisations and Guidance

- Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- Beat Bullying: www.beatbullying.org
- Childline: www.childline.org.uk
- DfE: “Preventing and Tackling Bullying. Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies”, and “Supporting children and young people who are bullied: advice for schools” March 2014: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventingand-tackling-bullying>
- DfE: “No health without mental health”: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/no-health-without-mental-health-across-government-outcomes-strategy>
- Family Lives: www.familylives.org.uk
- Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk
- MindEd: www.minded.org.uk
- NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk
- PSHE Association: www.pshe-association.org.uk
- Restorative Justice Council: www.restorativejustice.org.uk
- The Diana Award: www.diana-award.org.uk
- Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk
- Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk
- Young Carers: www.youngcarers.net

Cyberbullying

- Childnet International: www.childnet.com
- Digizen: www.digizen.org
- Internet Watch Foundation: www.iwf.org.uk
- Think U Know: www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk

LGBT

- EACH: www.eachaction.org.uk
- Pace: www.pacehealth.org.uk
- Schools Out: www.schools-out.org.uk
- Stonewall: www.stonewall.org.uk

SEND

- Changing Faces: www.changingfaces.org.uk
- Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk
- DfE: SEND code of practice: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

Racism and Hate

- Anne Frank Trust: www.annefrank.org.uk
- Kick it Out: www.kickitout.org
- Report it: www.report-it.org.uk
- Stop Hate: www.stophateuk.org
- Show Racism the Red Card: www.srtrc.org/educational

The Bullying Process

The victim will discuss the incident with their form tutor and often this will help resolve the situation. If the bullying continues then the matter will be passed to the Pastoral Manager (PM) or Head of Year (HOY).

The student will then be asked to make a statement, either verbally or written, and the member of staff investigating will make notes.

The 'bully' will then be interviewed and given the opportunity to give her side of the story. Again, a verbal or written statement will be made and the member of staff investigating will make notes.

If the stories of both students are the same, there may be no need to involve other students or to find witnesses.

The student guilty of bullying will be warned that any repetition will lead to the hierarchy of sanctions

The victim will be told to report immediately any repetition of the bullying behaviour

Both sets of parents will be informed by letter and the incident logged on both students' Sims files and the Central Bullying Record (CBR). The CBR will be brought to a governors meeting each year

In cases where the 'bully' denies the allegation, witnesses will need to be sought and interviewed, and additional evidence gathered. Such investigations are very time-consuming, no matter who initiated the investigation. It may then need to be shared between the SSL, HTL and Mr Smith. Even though the period of investigation may be difficult for the victim, it is essential that we are seen to be thorough and fair. No-one will report bullying if they feel that investigations are rushed or not dealt with properly and fairly. The investigation will continue until a satisfactory conclusion is reached.

During an investigation, it is likely that the alleged victim will feel vulnerable, particularly at breaks, lunchtimes & the end of school. She will be offered protection at such times, in the Inclusion Room, where they can go with or without friends, and possibly alternative arrangements for buying & eating lunch.