



## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

### **Whole School Policy including EYFS and Boarding**

This policy has been developed in consultation with representatives from the whole School community and with due regard to the Department for Education publication 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying - Advice for Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies, July 2017' which is available to download at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>.

#### **Definition of Bullying**

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying 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.

#### **The Seriousness of Bullying**

The School acknowledges that where bullying exists (both physical and emotional) it is a serious issue and may cause psychological damage; emotional bullying can often be more damaging than physical bullying. With increasing availability to children of electronic devices that give unrestricted access to the internet, online safety is taken seriously at The Mount School.

There is a strict pupil 'Responsible Use of ICT Agreement' as well as a 'Staff ICT and Social Media Policy' which pupils and staff sign. Parents also sign their child's 'Responsible Use of ICT Agreement'. The ICT Network Manager actively monitors hardware, software and internet usage and the vigilance of teachers is paramount in all we do with technology in the School.

#### **How Bullying Can Occur**

Bullying might be motivated by actual differences between children or perceived differences. Bullying can take many forms, but can include:

- Physical – hitting, kicking, pushing, taking/hiding belongings.
- Verbal – name calling, insulting, blaming, making offensive remarks.
- Racial – racial taunts, direct or indirect racist remarks, gestures or graffiti.
- Emotional - spreading nasty stories about someone or their family, exclusion from social groups, being made the subject of malicious rumours, sending malicious emails or text messages.
- Cyberbullying can be defined as the use of ICT (particularly social media websites, mobile telephones, text messages, photographs, the internet or email) to deliberately upset someone else. It can be an extension of face-to-face bullying, providing the bully with anonymity. This form of bullying invades home and personal space and can reach a wider audience (see e-Safety Policy for more information and guidance).
- Bullying based on prejudice against a protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religious belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity).

It is important to realise that not all inequality in relationships will constitute bullying, nor will all disagreements, differences or conflicts between members of the community. It can be harmful to use the term 'bully' particularly if the evidence of bullying is inconclusive. However, any nastiness between pupils is acted upon swiftly in order to prevent small problems becoming something deeper and more serious.

The following list is a non-exhaustive list of behaviours which are not, in isolation, bullying behaviours:

- Not liking someone or not being liked by someone.

- Being excluded from play or activities where there is no intention to humiliate or emotionally harm the person being excluded.
- Accidentally bumping into someone.
- Assertiveness.
- A single act of telling a joke about someone although the difference between having a sense of humour and making fun of someone is very fine and people can misjudge this use of humour with negative consequences.
- Arguments are just heated disagreements between two or more people or groups - conflict is a natural part of human behaviour; peaceful resolution of conflict is a healthy and essential part of community, of society and of a world where there are differences.
- Expression of negative thoughts or feelings regarding others - this is to be discouraged but does not constitute bullying per se.
- Isolated acts of harassment, aggressive behaviour, intimidation or meanness are not necessarily bullying but they can become so if they are repeated over time.

Teachers and schools have to make their own judgements about each specific case (DfE 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying', July 2017).

### **How the School Prevents Bullying**

Preventing violence and ensuring immediate physical and emotional safety is the School's first priority.

The Mount School York has a zero-tolerance approach to bullying including cyber bullying, prejudice based bullying and discriminatory bullying.

Bullying is discussed as part of the curriculum as is appropriate for the age group. There are many areas across the curriculum where pupils have opportunities to discuss the issue of bullying, where success is celebrated and where good behaviour and respect for each other are promoted and modelled by staff.

These include:

- PSHE
- Form Time.
- Drama/role play.
- RE discussions.
- Developing team spirit in PE/Games.
- Use of literature, including poems, stories and plays, historic events, current affairs and videos, problem solving activities.
- Morning Meetings/Assemblies.
- ICT – appropriate use of language in text messages, email and social networking sites.
- E-safety posters are displayed around School and a programme of e-Safety is delivered as part of the School curriculum.

The curriculum is used to:

- Raise awareness about bullying and the School's Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Increase understanding for victims and help to build an anti-bullying ethos.
- Teach pupils how to constructively manage their relationships with others.
- Develop a culture where bullying, including sexual harassment and online sexual abuse, are not tolerated, and where issues are identified and early intervention facilitated to better protect pupils.

The main aim is to:

- Create an environment of good behaviour and respect, where staff and older pupils set a positive example to younger pupils of caring, valuing and looking after one another.
- Enable pupils to develop an understanding of diversity and an appreciation of the differences between people, thus avoiding prejudice-based language.
- Build resilience in pupils by teaching them to protect themselves and others, including when online.

- Educate pupils as to what constitutes effective online safety and how to report online bullying without fear of retribution.

### **Raising Staff Awareness of Bullying**

All staff are made aware of the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Anti-bullying Policy, Behaviour Policies and the ICT/e-Safety Policy which outline the School's expectations for standards of behaviour. All staff are expected to uphold these policies at all times and must be particularly alert to pupils who may be vulnerable and at risk from bullying.

Through training, all staff will keep up-to-date with their understanding of the principles of this policy and their legal responsibilities with regard to preventing, dealing with and recording incidents of bullying. Staff are trained to be aware of possible signs of bullying, identifying action to resolve and prevent problems, including in relation to on-line bullying, and to know how to access sources of support. As appropriate, the School links with outside agencies to train staff and help them support pupils, in particular those with protected characteristics, including those with SEND, and LGBT pupils. Pupil matters are discussed weekly in both Junior and Senior School staff meetings.

### **Boarders**

Boarding staff are particularly mindful of their responsibilities when acting in loco parentis outside the school day. Boarding staff undergo annual training in how to monitor and manage the behaviour of boarders and deal with any bullying in line with the School's Anti-bullying and Behaviour policies. The School acknowledges that boarders who are being bullied (off line) can not necessarily escape their bullies for long periods of time as they are not able to go home as often. Boarding staff therefore pay particular attention to a victim of bullying who is a boarder, and keep a closer watch on that pupil's wellbeing.

### **Working With Parents and Guardians**

Parents and guardians play a key role in the management and monitoring of their child's behaviour, especially outside of school and in particular in cyber-space, and must be alert to incidents of bullying and the safeguarding and protection of pupils. All parents are expected to support the School's Anti-Bullying Policy.

Any parent who suspects that their child may be being bullied or is involved in bullying other children should speak to their child's Class Teacher/Personal Tutor/Head of Boarding. The child should be encouraged by their parents to talk to their Form Tutor about problems they are experiencing with other children or to talk about their involvement (including when they have found themselves a bystander) in the bullying of other children. Should parents feel concerns raised about bullying are not being acted upon quickly enough they should contact Rachel Capper (Head of Junior School) or Bridget Perks (Deputy Principal).

### **Raising Awareness of Pupil Responsibility**

The responsibility for preventing bullying is shared with all adults and pupils in the School community. Pupils are expected to put into practice what they have learned about anti-bullying and to make a positive contribution to the life of the School and the happiness and safety of all the pupils within it.

### **Reporting Bullying**

All staff, pupils and parents are required to be aware of the School's Anti-Bullying Policy so that everyone can act consistently when an incident is reported. All suspected and/or reported incidents of bullying, including cyberbullying and bullying outside School, will be dealt with as they occur.

Systems for children to confidently report abuse, should be well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible. These are displayed on posters in the Junior School foyer area and Senior School safeguarding boards. Through PSHE lessons and Form Time, children are reminded that they can approach trusted adults in School to share concerns. Children should know that their concerns will be treated seriously.

The Class Teacher/Personal Tutor/Head of Boarding normally deals with any reported incidents of bullying in the first instance but will also refer the matter to Heads of Year/Senior Staff. Other staff who are aware

of problems or who deal with them in the first instance, will also inform the Class Teacher/Personal Tutor/Head of Boarding/Senior Staff of the situation.

If incidents occur, staff will:

- Follow them up as soon as possible.
- Not make premature assumptions.
- Listen carefully to all accounts, from the victim and the bully and any others as appropriate (several pupils saying the same thing does not necessarily mean they are telling the truth).
- Establish the context of the incident and what can reasonably be done to avoid similar situations in the future.
- The victim will be comforted and provided with support as appropriate.
- The bully will be asked to provide an explanation of their behaviour.
- During this process both the bully and the person being bullied will receive an appropriate level of pastoral care and support, for example, through peer mentors, Class Teacher, Personal Tutor, Heads of Year, Head of Boarding, Senior Staff, School Nurse or outside agencies, as appropriate.

If the Principal/Designated Safeguarding Lead decide that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm because of the bullying incident, the case will be treated as a child protection concern and a referral made to outside agencies such as the Police or Children's Social Care. This will be done in line with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and procedures.

<https://www.mountschoolyork.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Safeguarding-and-Child-Protection-Policy-2021.pdf>

At all times, staff must ensure pupils on all sides are properly supported and are aware of to whom they can go for support. Pupils must be made aware of channels of internal and external support, for example, the School Nurse and Childline.

### **Sanctions to be Adopted**

In the event of any misbehaviour staff follow the School's Behaviour Policy which is available from the School website.

In cases of proven bullying, staff will stress to the bully the seriousness of the situation. The bully will be encouraged to understand why their behaviour was wrong and what effect it has had on the victim. The bully will be told to stop any inappropriate behaviour and sanctions will be implemented as appropriate, in line with the Behaviour Policy. Strong sanctions such as suspension and ultimately exclusion are applied in cases of severe or persistent bullying.

Following an incident, staff will:

- Follow-up after an incident, within about two weeks, to ensure that the bullying has not started again.
- Ensure that there is on-going follow-up and monitoring of the situation the following half-term.
- At annual 'hand-over' meetings, ensure that the next Form Tutor or Class Teacher knows of any history of problems between pupils.

### **Recording of Bullying Incidents**

A record of any bullying incidents will be kept with the Principal. This record will allow the evaluation of the effectiveness of approaches adopted and enable patterns to be identified. This will include the date, a brief description of the problem and an outline of the action taken to address the situation, including any sanctions.

Useful resources for parents, pupils and staff

- Kidscape <http://www.kidscape.org.uk/>
- Bullying UK <http://www.bullying.co.uk/advice-for-parents/how-to-spot-the-signs-of-bullying>
- Kid smart <http://www.kidsmart.org.uk/parents>
- Think you know – CEOP <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents>
- Anti-bullying Alliance <http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk>
- Beat Bullying <http://beatbullying.org.uk>

- DfE Advice for Parents on Cyberbullying  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/444865/Advice\\_for\\_parents\\_on\\_cyberbullying.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444865/Advice_for_parents_on_cyberbullying.pdf)
- School Nurse [Cindy Magyar](#)
- School Safeguarding Team:  
DSL: [Bridget Perks](#)  
DDSLs: [Rachel Capper](#) (with responsibility for the Junior School and the EYFS); [Jo Atkinson](#)