

Anti-bullying Policy

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Church Stretton School

Anti-bullying Policy

This policy takes into account the following documents:

- Preventing and Tackling Bullying Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies - DfE, 2017
- Working Together to Safeguard Children – DfE, 2018
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, September – DfE, 2023
- Shropshire Children’s Trust (SCT) and Shropshire Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) Anti-Bullying Charter – 2014
- SSP Procedures

1. Context

Church Stretton School believes that everyone has the right to feel welcome, safe and happy. We are committed to ensuring that all members of the school community are able to achieve their potential, without the fear of being bullied. Bullying of any kind is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.

At Church Stretton School, it is the responsibility of all members of the school community to implement these anti-bullying procedures. It is our aim to prevent bullying by establishing a positive environment and encouraging standards of behaviour that promote a sense of responsibility for the welfare of others.

Church Stretton School takes the issue of bullying very seriously. Students, parents / carers and staff should understand that reporting instances of bullying is essential and be assured that they will be fully supported.

It should be noted that the use of technology to intimidate others (cyber-bullying) is an increasing national trend and that such forms of bullying will also be dealt with robustly under the school’s anti-bullying procedures and in certain situations in conjunction with the Police.

This policy is linked directly to the following policies / documents:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Social media Policy
- Equality Statement and Accessibility Plan
- PSHE curriculum
- The Trust Sexual Harassment and abuse statement

The aims of the school’s anti-bullying strategies and intervention systems are to:

- Prevent, de-escalate and / or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour in line with the Behaviour Policy
- React to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way
- Safeguard those students who have experienced bullying and those who have been involved in the act of bullying and to trigger actions to support these students

2. What is bullying?

Whilst there is no single definition of bullying, the DfE provides the following guidance in Preventing and Tackling Bullying (2017):

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Although sometimes occurring between two individuals in isolation, bullying quite often takes place in the presence of others.

Bullying can take place directly (e.g. face to face) or indirectly (e.g. through others). It can take many forms (e.g. cyber-bullying via text messages or the Internet) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities.

It might be motivated by actual differences between children or perceived differences

Most definitions of bullying include the following elements:

- The bullying is intended to cause distress
- The behaviour is repeated
- There is an imbalance of power between the perpetrator of bullying and the target

3. Forms of bullying

Forms of bullying can include:

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber - using any area of the Internet to threaten, intimidate, degrade, embarrass or upset others

4. Reasons for bullying

People may be bullied for a variety of reasons, including:

- Ethnic background, religion or culture
- Disability, education needs or being particularly able, gifted or talented
- Sexual orientation
- Gender (including sexualised bullying)
- Size, appearance or health conditions
- Social or economic status
- Age / maturity
- Home circumstances

5. Signs and symptoms

A child may display signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Whilst not exhaustive or always an indication of bullying, adults should be aware of these possible signs and should investigate if a young person:

- Is frightened of walking to or from school
- Does not want to go on the school bus
- Asks to be driven to school, rather than walk
- Changes their usual routine
- Is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- Begins to truant
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens suicide
- Runs away
- Cries themselves to sleep or has nightmares
- Feels ill in the morning
- Begins to do poorly at school
- Comes home with damaged clothing or property
- Has possessions which 'go missing'
- Asks for money or starts stealing
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what is wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- Is afraid of the Internet or mobile devices

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

6. Roles and responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all members of the school community to challenge bullying if it occurs. All staff are made aware of the procedures they should follow if an incidence of bullying is brought to their attention. The first point of contact for parents should be the student's Head of Year. Mr Longhurst, Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral Lead), has ultimate responsibility for this policy alongside the Headteacher.

All school staff must be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly, sensitively and effectively against it, in accordance with the Anti-bullying Policy. There is no 'hierarchy' of bullying, all forms of bullying should be taken equally seriously and dealt with appropriately. This is the case even where incidents occur outside the school premises. The Education Act 2006 gives Headteachers the discretion to discipline students, even where incidents of bad behaviour take place outside school premises and when the students are beyond the lawful control of school staff, including online events where the support of the police may be requested.

The role of the school

Church Stretton School adopts a range of strategies to reduce bullying and tackle it effectively when it does occur. These include:

- Preventing, de-escalating and stopping any harmful behaviour
- Enabling students to report bullying incidents
- Reacting to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way
- Taking measures to safeguard the student who has experienced the bullying and implement sources of support for the student where appropriate
- Applying disciplinary consequences to the student causing the bullying
- Working with the student who has caused the bullying to ensure they learn from the experience, for example through mediation or multi-agency support
- Communicating effectively with parents / carers, so they are fully aware of how bullying issues are being resolved
- Involving staff, parents / carers and students in the resolution of conflicts that may arise
- Developing and implementing new strategies to prevent and tackle bullying
- Regularly reviewing policies and strategies

The role of the Governors

Governors have the responsibility to ensure that:

- The Anti-bullying Policy is in place
- It reflects the school's values and practice
- They guide the Headteacher in determining measures to promote good behaviour
- The Anti-bullying Policy is reviewed annually

Governors are informed of, and monitor, the number of bullying incidents and steps the Headteacher and staff have taken to deal with these.

The role of staff

All staff have an important role to play in ensuring that bullying is identified and reported. Staff should ensure that they:

- Understand the principles and purpose of the Anti-bullying Policy
- Understand their responsibilities regarding bullying
- Know what consequences and behaviour management strategies are in place and where to seek support
- Understand the needs of vulnerable students
- Know the procedures for reporting and referral
- Use Tutor Time, PSHE lessons and curriculum time to promote an open and honest dialogue with their students about bullying and ways to prevent it
- Maintain dialogue with parents / carers, when investigating and resolving bullying issues

The role of students

Students also play a vital role in tackling bullying and they should ensure that they:

- Know and understand the Anti-bullying Policy
- Know and understand the difference between unkind behaviour and bullying
- Feel confident that the school will act quickly and fairly with any bullying issues that are reported
- Know the consequences if they are found to be bullying
- Respond honestly to questionnaires or discussions about bullying
- Take responsibility for their own behaviour to ensure they are not being hurtful to others in school, whether intentionally or otherwise
- Report bullying to a peer or adult if they are either the victim of bullying or witness bullying of others via conversations, emails, use of the worry box or the Sharp system (Student help & advice reporting page)

The role of parents /carers

Parents and carers should work in partnership with the school to support children who are being bullied or who bully. Parents should ensure that they:

- Report any incidents of bullying to the school and maintain dialogue with key staff, whilst the issue is being investigated and resolved
- Look for signs of behaviour change, which may be linked to bullying
- Support and encourage their child to talk to someone in school, if they are being bullied
- Are proactive in monitoring their child's use of ICT (including their mobile phone) and Internet access, in particular social media and networking sites
- Promote tolerance and kindness
- Encourage their child not to be aggressive with other people
- Support the school in their actions, including where sanctions are imposed on their child, if they have been found responsible for bullying

7. Actions to prevent bullying

We adopt a proactive approach to preventing bullying, being vigilant for signs of bullying and taking reports of bullying seriously. Students are provided with regular opportunities to talk about bullying and we listen to their views in order to adapt our strategies for dealing with bullying. Assemblies, whole school questionnaires, student voice, curriculum time, PSHE lessons and Tutor Time all focus on the issue of bullying and how to tackle it as a whole school community. A variety of methods and services are used in order to prevent bullying, including:

- Assemblies
- Regular discussions about bullying
- School Council discussions
- Anti-bullying Week
- Behaviour logs and reports
- Worry Boxes
- Peer Mentoring
- Pastoral Support Team
- CHAT
- Support from external agencies
- Referrals to the School Nurse
- Display materials around school
- Organisation of the school environment
- Rewards and consequences procedures
- Sharp (Student help & advice reporting page)
- Tutor-time takeaways

8. Actions to tackle bullying

If a parent / carer is concerned about bullying they should contact their child's Head of Year, in the first instance. If the matter is not resolved and a parent / carer wishes to take the matter further, they should then contact Mr M Longhurst (Assistant Headteacher - Pastoral Lead).

All reported incidents of bullying are investigated and taken seriously. A record is kept of all incidents. The following steps will be taken by staff when dealing with incidents:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be taken seriously and appropriate first steps are taken promptly by the member of staff who has been made aware of the issue
- Each incident will be investigated thoroughly, sensitively and effectively
- Statements from all parties involved (including any witnesses) will be taken and collated by the member of staff investigating
- A clear account of the incident, actions taken by the Head of year and review date will be recorded and kept, so incidents can be monitored
- After investigating the incident, a decision will be made about any outcomes, including consequences in line with the school's Behaviour Policy, and monitoring / support systems
- Where appropriate, students will undergo a process of reconciliation, if all parties agree to this
- Students who have been found to have bullied others will be reminded of the impact of bullying and that repeated behaviour will incur further consequences
- Relevant staff will be kept informed and, if the bullying persists, they will record this and inform the Pastoral Lead, so further action can be taken
- Parents / carers of both the victim and the bully will be kept informed about incidents and any action taken, or to be taken, by the school, although the school will not discuss specific actions relating to any child other than their own
- Parents / carers are asked to support the strategies that the school puts in place
- The school will inform the Local Authority of any proven hate or prejudice related incident

Students who have been bullied will be supported, as appropriate, by:

- Having an immediate opportunity to discuss the incident(s) with an appropriate member of staff
- Being reassured
- Being offered support
- Raising their self-esteem and confidence
- Being encouraged to report further issues
- Arranging a review date / time to discuss outcomes and appropriate follow-up

Students who have bullied will be supported, as appropriate, by:

- Having an immediate opportunity to discuss the incident(s) with an appropriate member of staff
- Establishing what behaviour was inappropriate and why the student became involved
- Establishing clearly what behaviour needs to change, and how the school can support this change (linked to the Behaviour Policy)
- Informing parents / carers of agreed actions and establishing how they can support

9. Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying is defined as:

The use of information and communications technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the Internet, to deliberately upset someone else.

Cyber-bullying can be an extension of face-to-face bullying or occur only online. One of the main concerns is that cyber-bullying invades home and personal space. Stopping cyber-bullying can be difficult and it often requires a co-ordinated effort from school and parents / carers.

Cyber-bullying has many forms:

- Threats
- Repeatedly sending unwanted texts / messages
- Intimidation
- Sexual harassment
- Harassment
- Video recording of anti-social behaviour
- Manipulation
- Publication of private information or images

If a student has been the victim of cyber-bullying, the school reserves the right to be involved, whether the electronic material was produced within the school or outside, as such incidents often continue within school (Appendix 1).

Even where online bullying occurs exclusively beyond school, students must be aware that many forms of cyber-bullying are illegal and the school will recommend that parents contact the police, if necessary.

The school will review electronic material held or accessed by any student in the school, if cyber-bullying is suspected. School will use the Addressing social media issues diagram (page 8) when deciding what action to take with regards incident on social media.

We will work with students to raise awareness of the potential risks and effects of using social media inappropriately, particularly relating to cyber-bullying.

Additional strategies available to us in order to combat this form of bullying include:

- Monitoring the use of ICT during school hours
- Banning the use of mobile phones during school hours
- Encouraging safe use of ICT (e.g. secure passwords / privacy settings)
- Confiscating mobile phones
- Restricting access to ICT provision during school hours
- Raising awareness of this particular form of bullying through PSHE lessons and assemblies
- Encouraging parents to monitor use of ICT outside of school hours
- Providing students with access to a range of means of reporting incidents causing concern
- Where necessary, working closely with the Police to report concerns at the earliest opportunity

To support Church Stretton School in tackling cyber-bullying, parents / carers should:

- Contact their child's Head of Year if they have concerns about this form of bullying
- Be vigilant of how their child uses ICT and social media
- Use the relevant safety 'tools' that are available to help monitor and manage their child's Internet use
- Keep any evidence of cyber-bullying (e.g. offending messages / online conversations)

Church Stretton school will not tolerate sexual harassment and abuse either in person and/or online. Any incidents will be dealt with using the school behaviour policy and the school reserve the right to involve the police if required.

10. Child-on-child abuse

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) states that all staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse).

This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying);
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm • Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- Sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery)
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals

All staff should be alert to the well-being of students to determine whether peer-on-peer abuse is taking place. Signs that a child may be suffering from child-on-child abuse can also overlap with those indicating other types of abuse. Any allegations of child-on-child abuse will be treated as a safeguarding concern and should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Mr M Longhurst, Assistant Headteacher). Such

concerns will be investigated and managed in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

11. Hate Crimes and hate-related incidents

A hate crime is defined as 'Any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's race or perceived race; religion or perceived religion; sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation; disability or perceived disability and any crime motivated by hostility or prejudice against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender.'

A hate incident is any incident which the victim, or anyone else, thinks is based on someone's prejudice towards them because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or because they are transgender.

The 'Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report' recommended that the following definition of a racist incident should be adopted by the police, local government and other relevant agencies:

'A racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim, or any other person.'

School is requested to report proven hate-related incidents to the local authority via completion of the Shropshire schools hate-related incident report form. The numbers of incidents reported, and the nature of those incidents are then reported to the Hate Crime Reporting Sub-group.

As a school we also work with our local policing team to educate students where a hate-related incident has taken place. School will only officially report a racist incident to the police if they believe a crime has been committed. See [Citizens Advice](#) for guidance on when a racist incident can be considered a crime.

12. External Agencies

In some cases, it is appropriate to involve external agencies, such as the Police, to aid in an investigation or to support students who have been involved in bullying. If this is the case, parents / carers will be informed.

13. Support services for parents who are concerned about their child

There are a number of support services available to parents / carers, including:

- Young Minds www.youngminds.org.uk
- Bullying UK www.bullying.co.uk
- Kidscape www.kidscape.org.uk

14. Monitoring, evaluation and review

Church Stretton School will review this policy annually to assess its implementation and effectiveness.

The Anti-bullying Policy has been adopted by the Church Stretton Local Governing Body.

Appendix 1: Social media response

