

Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedure



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Responsible Person: Deputy Headmaster

References: *Children Act (1989)*
Equality Act (2010)
Independent School Standard Regulations (2014)
Behaviour and Discipline in Schools (2012)
Preventing and Tackling Bullying (2014)

Policy Number: 10a

1. Introduction

St John's expects all members of the school community to treat other people with courtesy and respect. Everyone has the right to be safe and secure, whether at school or elsewhere and to be protected when vulnerable. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable; it damages children physically and psychologically and the School will therefore do all that it can to prevent it.

This policy has the following objective:

- To ensure that all governors, teaching and support staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is, understand the school policy and what to do if bullying arises.

The School has produced an Anti-Bullying Policy specifically for pupils (appendix 1). This policy is available to parents on the School website

2. What is bullying?

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disability.

Bullying might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously the School's first priority, but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; teachers will have to make their own judgements about each specific case.

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control of over the relationship which makes it difficult for those that they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online. Sometimes the perpetrator is being thoughtless.

The School is clear that pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEND) may be more vulnerable and will take this into account when investigating cases and educating staff and pupils.

Examples of bullying behaviour:

- *Physical:* pushing, kicking, hitting or any other form of violence, damaging or hiding someone else's belongings or clothes. Deliberately setting someone up to get the blame for breaking school rules and initiation ceremonies.
- *Emotional:* being deliberately unfriendly, excluding from a group, spreading rumours.
- *Verbal:* aggressive name calling, teasing, mockery, insults, spreading rumours, use of homophobic, racist, sexist and other types of discriminatory language.
- *Religious:* mocking, ridiculing or tormenting someone because of their religious beliefs.
- *Sexual:* unwanted sexual attention or sexually abusive written or verbal comments. Inappropriate comments about appearance and attractiveness, uninvited propositions, uninvited touching and using innuendo and inappropriate imagery.
- *Cultural:* mocking, humiliating or tormenting a pupil because of their nationality or background (e.g. their accent, manners or appearance).
- *Homophobic:* humiliating, ridiculing or tormenting because of their sexual orientation. Derogatory use of the word 'gay'.
- *Racist:* racial taunts, gestures or written comments
- *Disability:* making comments about obvious disabilities or in time about disabilities that become apparent (learning difficulties) or because a child is adopted or is a carer.
- *Cyber:* see below

It is important to stress that it is the perception of the victim and not the perpetrator that matters; too often perpetrators pass off their behaviour as banter.

What are the signs of bullying?

It is not always easy or even possible to tell whether someone is upset. Young people who feel under emotional pressure may find it hard to talk. A pupil displaying the following may be experiencing bullying:

- becomes School phobic;
- becomes withdrawn, anxious or loses confidence;
- becomes unusually aggressive or disruptive;
- changes his or her usual routine (for instance, stops going to the dayroom or to lunch);
- begins to perform poorly in schoolwork;
- has regular illnesses/regularly reports to the medical centre;
- has possessions which are damaged or continually 'misplaced';
- has unexplained cuts or bruises;
- starts to bully others;
- refuses to discuss what is wrong;
- seems afraid of or jumpy when answering a mobile phone or using the internet;
- offers implausible excuses for any of the above.

While none of the above necessarily indicates bullying, bullying should be considered a possibility if any of the above occurs and the situation should be investigated. For guidance on the signs of cyber-bullying please see below.

3. Preventing bullying & responses to bullying

Preventing bullying is a key factor and to this end the School undertakes to:

- Encourage appropriate behaviour at all times, ensuring pupils know what is expected of them;
- provide pupils with a copy of the Pupils' Charter and School Behaviour Policy which underlines these expectations (available in pupil handbook);
- include anti-bullying education at induction and as an integral part of the Wellbeing Programme;
- raise awareness of bullying and regularly remind pupils of the nature of bullying and the need to ensure an anti-bullying culture pervades all areas of school life, e.g. by the use of assemblies and anti-bullying week.
- Raise awareness of staff through training so that the principles of this policy are understood.
- educate pupils, especially boarders, that initiation ceremonies or physical punishments may be a form of bullying and are unacceptable;

- use the Student Council and the Boarders' Council to raise awareness of the School's approach to bullying;
- remind pupils of the role of bystanders in preventing bullying and emphasise that bystanders have a responsibility to intervene appropriately when they witness bullying;
- ensure that staff and others, such as prefects, who are in positions of responsibility, are aware of the signs and symptoms of bullying and of how to respond;
- invest in specialised skills and training, as appropriate, to understand the needs of the pupils, including those with SEN or disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender pupils (LGB&T);
- discuss the idea of 'different but equal' and not, for example, defining a pupil by his or her colour, religion, disability or sexual orientation.
- Monitor and filter pupils access to the internet.

The Director of Pastoral Care will be responsible for the coordinating the School's Anti-Bullying strategy.

The School recognises that pupils do not always wish to report bullying, but an open approach is encouraged and it is hoped that any pupil who is being bullied will seek help. It may, for instance, be appropriate to seek help from a senior pupil or prefect rather than a member of staff. Whatever the circumstances, bullying is never acceptable, and it is vital that any victim of bullying feels supported and feels able to report the incident to an appropriate person.

Where a parent or pupil is concerned that someone is being bullied they should speak with their son or daughter's tutor or Housemaster/mistress. Pupils can anonymously report bullying through Firefly : [Bullying — St John's School](#)

Where the School becomes aware of a bullying incident, it undertakes to respond appropriately. In all cases the aim of the response is to stop the bullying, to ensure that the bully understands why his/her behaviour is unacceptable and to aim to prevent any reoccurrence. Whilst the precise response will depend on the specific circumstances, the following general guidelines will apply:

- All reported instances of bullying will be taken seriously. In deciding how to proceed in a particular case, the School will listen carefully to the victim and discuss with him/her the preferred and appropriate course of action.
- It is recognised that victims are often frightened to report bullying as they fear that the bully will retaliate by escalating the nature of the bullying. The School recognises this as typical bullying behaviour and encourages pupils to be confident that the School will deal sensitively with any reported incident.
- All incidents will be investigated and serious incidents will be recorded by staff (in CPOMs). Where appropriate parents will be informed and may be asked to attend a meeting to discuss the incident.
- Pupils who are found to have been bullying will be encouraged to confront their behaviour and they will be offered help and guidance as to how to correct their behaviour. The motivation for their behaviour should be considered.
- If possible the pupils will be reconciled.
- Where bullying is persistent, appropriate sanctions will be applied. Any pupil who persists in bullying others must understand that he/she may ultimately lose the right to remain in the School.

The Deputy Headmaster will regularly review incidents of bullying to monitor the effectiveness of the approach adopted and enable for any patterns to be identified.

4. Guidance for staff

All Staff are in a position of trust, and there are expectations that they will act in a professional manner at all times and model appropriate behaviour. In their dealings with pupils and with each other, staff should not misuse their positions of power and they should at all times treat pupils and other staff with respect. Staff should be aware of the contents of the Child Protection Policy and of their responsibilities towards all pupils in the School.

All staff should be prepared to listen to pupils when they wish to talk about bullying behaviour. It is crucial that pupils can trust staff to take their concerns seriously and to treat their concerns sensitively

and with regard to their right of privacy. All staff should seek to regularly reinforce the School's anti-bullying ethos.

While some pupils may report bullying, others may, for a variety of reasons, be unable to do so. Staff should, however, be on the lookout for signs and symptoms (as outlined above) of a pupil being bullied.

Where staff observe bullying behaviour they should in the first instance confront the bully and reinforce the School's position on bullying. All staff should aim to confront any inappropriate behaviour, including banter, teasing and name-calling. Failure to do so may suggest to pupils that staff are giving their tacit approval to the behaviour.

All incidents of bullying should be reported to the appropriate Senior House Staff (SHS). In discussion with the member of staff who has observed the bullying, the Senior House Staff will decide the appropriate course of action. It should be remembered that the needs of both victim and bully need to be considered.

The following options should be considered:

- The victim's Senior House Staff should speak to the victim and put in place any necessary support.
- The bully's Senior House Staff should speak to the bully, admonishing and counselling as appropriate. A written record should be kept (CPOMs)
- Where the incident is deemed to be more serious, the Director of Education will be involved. He will keep a written record of all incidents referred to him (which will be added to CPOMs). He may deem it appropriate to escalate to the Deputy Headmaster and/or Headmaster, communicate with parents and where deemed necessary, apply appropriate sanctions
- All staff, but especially SHS and the Deputy Headmaster, need to record incidents of bullying in CPOMs in order to identify trends or patterns of behaviour.
- Support must be provided to the victim and the perpetrator.

The following guidelines apply where there is a need to investigate an incident of bullying within a tutor group. Such an investigation would usually involve the tutor and the appropriate SHS. If in doubt about the appropriate procedure, reference should be made to the Deputy Headmaster. As a general rule we should in the first instance avoid using punishments to help resolve a problem.

- *Interview the victim*
Take an account from the victim and really listen. The circumstances are not especially important but the effects are. Note down the feelings and allow the victim to express these at length. It is sometimes useful to get the victim to write down his or her feelings.
- *Call a meeting of those involved in the bullying*
Where one or two pupils are the chief instigators of the bullying then include observers or those who collude by failing to intervene.
- *Explain the problem*
Tell the group how the victim is feeling and emphasise his/her distress. Do not discuss the fine details or attribute blame.
- *Share responsibility*
Do not attribute blame; state that you know that the members of the group are responsible people and can do something about it.
- *Ask each member of the group to suggest a way in which the victim could be helped to feel happier.*
List all the ideas that emerge and leave it there.
- *Pass the responsibility over to the group to solve*
About a week later see each group member individually to find out how things are going. You should also see the victim.
Throughout the process it is important to convey your belief that the pupils involved are not "bad"; are capable of responsible and kind behaviour, and that they will help the victim.
- *Follow Up*
Tutors should check regularly that the bullying problem has been eradicated. Where it persists the tutor should inform Senior House Staff who should consult the Director of Education, Director of Pastoral Care or Deputy Headmaster.

Where staff feels that they have been the victim of bullying they should report the incident to their line manager.

5. Cyberbullying

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 pupil involved. Research shows 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 bystanders 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 often be hidden and subtle. The impact of cyberbullying can be particularly severe as the victim feels that they cannot escape the bullying which can take place at school or at home.

Social media can create a false sense of security; it can be easier to say and reveal things online that wouldn't be said face to face; be cruel, aggressive or flirtatious. It is important for pupils to remember that there are offline consequences to online behaviour. Comments intended to be funny can often be misinterpreted online whereas if said face to face could be acceptable as facial expressions, body language, tone of voice and context all help to ensure that comments are taken the right way. Social networking can increase existing social pressures 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 involves a large audience and this increases the pressure.

What are the signs of cyberbullying?

It is not easy to spot the signs as it can happen all the time, which is a feature that makes it different to others forms of bullying. Be alert to changes in behaviour, for example:

- Being upset, withdrawn or outraged after using the internet or mobile phone.
- Unwillingness to talk or secretive about online activities and mobile phone use.
- Spending much more or much less time texting, gaming or using social media.
- Many new phone numbers, texts or email addresses show up on their mobile phone, laptop or tablet.
- Not wanting to go to school and/or avoiding meeting friends and school mates.
- Avoiding formerly enjoyable social situations.
- Difficulty sleeping
- Low self-esteem.

Support for children who are bullied

As with any form of bullying staff should support pupils who have been bullied and develop strategies to prevent bullying from happening. Cyberbullying can be upsetting and knock confidence. Childline has produced guidance for young people on building their confidence after online bullying available at: [Childline – Building confidence after online bullying.](#)

The Anti-Bullying alliance has excellent advice online outlining the range of support that is available to schools, parents and pupils and can be found [here](#).

6. Boarding

The School is conscious that bullying can take place during boarding time and will have regard to the National Minimum Standards (NMS) for Boarding schools (especially standard 12). These include:

- Briefing for senior pupils given positions of responsibility over other pupils, on appropriate action to take should they receive allegations of abuse or bullying.
- Training for boarding tutors to raise awareness.

7. Bullying outside school premises

Where bullying outside school is reported to staff (including cyber-bullying) it will be investigated and acted on in accordance with the procedures outlined above. The Headmaster, Deputy Head and Director of Education will also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or other agencies of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police will always be informed.

In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying the teacher can only discipline the pupil on school premises or elsewhere when the pupil is under the lawful control of the staff member. Teachers have a legal authority to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the School premises; this can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises such as on school or public transport, in Leatherhead, during educational visits or online.

8. Safeguarding

A bullying incident will be addressed as a child protection concern where this is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. In assessing this, the School will refer to Surrey Safeguarding Children's Board (SSCB) [Levels of Needs \(2016\)](#). Where it is the case, staff should report their concerns in accordance with the procedures outlined in the School's *Policy and Procedure for Safeguarding and Protecting Children*. Further guidance is available in this document.

9. Further sources of information

General sites:

[Anti-Bullying Alliance \(ABA\)](#)

[Kidscape](#)

[The Diana Award](#)

[The BIG Award](#)

Cyber-bullying:

[ChildNet International](#)

[Think U Know](#): resources provided by Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP)

[Digizen](#)

[Advice on Child Internet Safety 1.0](#): The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (OKCCIS) guidelines.

Appendix 1: Information for pupils

The following is published in Houses and in the Pupil Handbook:

St John's expects all members of the school community to treat other people with courtesy and respect. Everyone has the right to be safe and secure, whether at school or elsewhere and to be protected when vulnerable. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and the School's approach is clear: it is always unacceptable.

It is important to stress that it is the perception of the victim and not the perpetrator that matters; too often perpetrators pass off their behaviour as banter.

What is bullying?

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Bystanders

The School makes it clear to all pupils that bystanders have a key responsibility to the School community and to anyone they see being bullied or victimised. They are encouraged not to tolerate such behaviour and to stand up for what they know to be right, for example by telling a member of staff what they have seen or heard.

What to do

The School recognises that pupils do not always wish to report bullying, but an open approach is encouraged and it is hoped that any pupil who is being bullied will seek help. It may, for instance, be appropriate to seek help from a senior pupil or prefect rather than a member of staff. Whatever the circumstances, bullying is never acceptable, and it is vital that any victim of bullying feels supported and feels able to report the incident to an appropriate person. Pupils can make an anonymous report using Firefly: [Bullying — St John's School](#). The following sites can offer assistance:

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