



## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

*This policy, which applies to the whole school, is publicly available on the school website and upon request a copy (which can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required) may be obtained from the School Office.*

*Please also refer to the Positive Behaviour Code and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*

### Document Details

Information Sharing Category	Public Domain
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Authorised by (if required)	Principal and the Board of Governors
Responsible Area	Senior Leadership and Board of Governors

**In writing this policy, the following legal status documents, related documents and references have been taken into consideration**

Legal Status:

- Complies with The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations currently in force.
- Prepared with reference to: [Preventing and Tackling Bullying \(July 2017\)](#), [Cyberbullying: Advice for Principals and school staff \(DfE- November 2014\)](#), [Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying \(DfE- November 2014\)](#) and [School support for children and young people who are bullied \(DfE- March 2014\)](#), [Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#) and the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#)

**Monitoring and Review:** This document will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Principal.

This document was reviewed and agreed by the Board of Governors in September 2020 and if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require, prior to September 2021, the policy will be reviewed accordingly.

Signed:

Date Reviewed: September 2020

Next Review: September 2021

Stephen Oliver  
Principal

Freddy L Turk  
Chair of Governors

### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell someone and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a **TELLING** school. This means that *anyone* who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

Any member of the Our Lady's Abingdon community, pupil, employee or volunteer has the right to learn and work without fear of being bullied. Through this policy, Our Lady's Abingdon aims to prevent bullying. Its objectives are to ensure that all members of the community:

- Feel safe from bullying
- Recognise bullying behaviour

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- Understand and support the schools stance against bullying
- Know how to report incidents of bullying
- Contribute to informing and, where possible, evaluating this policy.

When a child suffers harm as a result of bullying, the school will consider whether this becomes a safeguarding issue. Please refer to our Safeguarding – Child Protection Policy and our Peer on Peer abuse Policy for more details.

## **1.0 PRINCIPLES**

- 1.1 As in any community, there is always a possibility that some form of bullying may occur. The School does its utmost to encourage an ethos where bullying is acknowledged as totally wrong and the reporting of bullying is viewed as the correct and responsible action to take. No individual should have to suffer any form of intimidation, and bullying has no place at OLA.
- 1.2 OLA acknowledges its responsibility to protect all individuals in the School and to act promptly if any cases of bullying are discovered.

## **2.0 DEFINITION OF BULLYING**

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. We recognise the seriousness of bullying in causing psychological damage and even suicide (although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour).

- 2.1 The School views bullying as an act of unkindness by one or more pupils against other individuals or group of pupils and as deliberately hurtful behaviour involving unequal power relationships, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. Bullying may be sexual, about race, a disability, religious affiliation or practice, culture or sexual orientation. It can take many forms, but includes harassment, physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft), verbal (e.g. racist remarks, homophobic language), indirect (e.g. spreading rumours, excluding someone from social groups) or cyber bullying (e.g. use of internet sites, internet messaging, sending of photographs, email or text).
- 2.2 Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour for example becoming shy or nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be changes to work patterns, a lack of concentration or truancy. This is not an exhaustive list and pupils, staff and parents should be alert to any signs that might indicate that bullying is taking place.

## **3.0 FEATURES OF BULLYING**

- 3.1. *Nature:* this can be physical and/or psychological. Verbal bullying is the most common form of bullying and can escalate into violence. This can be a defensive or retaliatory reaction by the victim. It can, of course, result if the name-calling is seen to have little or no effect on the part of the aggressor. Types of bullying include:
  - Verbal bullying can be directed at the victim personally or can be directed at their relations or the group whom they may be regarded as representing (this is often more provoking and injurious). Racist, religious and sexual taunts, (particularly homophobic in the case of younger boys) all come under this category.
  - Physical violence and/or threatening behaviour. Often the threat of violence, which may never materialise, is more intimidating because it is less tangible and overt. It is also less difficult to attribute.
  - Isolation / Rejection: deliberately being ostracised from various groups is designed to cause distress and demoralise the victim.
  - Indirect or Insidious behaviour: this covers a wide variety of methods, many in themselves ingenious, such as malicious rumour, the taking, destroying or hiding of possessions. More serious and extreme examples of this type of bullying include anonymous telephone calls, hate mail, and the like.
- 3.2 *Intensity:* this can range from “play-fighting” on the playground to vicious assault in physical terms and from the calling of nicknames to repeated nuisance telephone calls in psychological terms. It is the intent of the bully and the effect on the victim, which in all cases determines what, constitutes bullying.
- 3.3 *Duration:* bullying can be a once only incident where there is an obvious discrepancy between the ages, power, strength of the parties concerned, occasional, intermittent, short-lived, or it can be regular, repeated and long-standing.
- 3.4 *Intention:* bullying is premeditated and calculated to injure (whether psychologically or physically) rather than thoughtless or accidental. Many bullies will attempt to excuse their actions by denying that this was the

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intention. In the minority of cases this lack of understanding of the outcome of their actions and therefore what constitutes bullying remains an excuse.

3.5 Bullying may be carried out by one pupil or by a group.

3.6 *Motivation:* with bullies the motive is mainly to achieve power over another individual in an attempt to promote their own personal image. It may also be to secure affiliation to a group regarded as having more profile within a year group than all others have. A victim may also be a scapegoat as part of preserving group solidarity.

3.7 *Location:* given its nature bullying can take place in a variety of locations, hence the need to be vigilant at all times. In any school, there are times and places which increase the potential of bullies to operate.

#### 4.0 TYPES OF BULLYING

4.1 *Racist* - In the 1999 MacPherson Report, racist bullying was defined as 'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person'. More recently the law on racial discrimination defines it as 'Unwanted conduct with the purpose of violating dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment'.

Such behaviour is characterised by:

- Verbal abuse by name-calling, racist jokes and offensive mimicry
- Physical threats or attacks
- Inciting others to behave in a racist way
- Refusing to cooperate in work or in play

4.2 *Sexual* - Sexual bullying involves both genders. Such behaviour is characterised by:

- Abusive name-calling
- Looks and comments about appearance, attractiveness, emerging puberty

4.3 *Sexist* - This is the targeting of an individual for being perceived as a member of a particular gender. Such behaviour is characterised by:

- Abusive name calling
- Offensive mimicry
- Physical violence or threatening behaviour
- Inciting others to behave in a sexist manner
- Mockery of a person's demeanour or manner of speaking

4.4 *Homophobic* - Homophobic bullying is the result of the use of language, gesture or media to describe someone who is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered in all to injure them. Such behaviour is characterised by:

- Abusive name calling
- Social exclusion
- Inciting others to act in an homophobic manner
- Refusing to cooperate in work or in recreation

4.5 *Cyber Bullying* - Cyber bullying is an aggressive intentional act carried out by an individual or group, using electronic media, repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot defend him or herself.

Seven categories of cyber bullying have been identified:

- Text messaging
- Sending pictures or video clips
- Phone calling
- Email messaging
- Chat room messaging
- Instant messaging
- Website bullying including the use of defamatory blogs, personal websites, personal space and on-line personal polling sites

4.6 *Special Educational Needs and Disability* - Pupils with special educational needs or disabilities may not be able to articulate experiences as well as other children. However, they are often at greater risk of being bullied, both directly and indirectly, and usually about their specific difficulties or disability.

4.7 *Religious* - the term religious bullying refers to a range of hurtful behaviour, both physical and psychological, that makes a person feel unwelcome, marginalised, excluded, powerless or worthless because of their faith community. Such behaviour is characterised by:

- when people are stereotyped by their religion
- when a person is rejected or excluded from a group because of their religion

- 4.8 *Cultural bullying* is something someone does or says that offends someone else in connection with their culture. Such behaviour is characterised by:
- when a person is verbally abused because of their culture or the colour of their skin, their religion, the country they come from, their language and the way they talk, the food they eat, clothes they wear or their background
  - when people make fun of a person's family
  - when a person is treated unfairly because of their way of life.

Advice and guidance to counter such bullying and to respond to it is updated in the Students' Handbook and Planner each year. These forms of bullying, regardless of whether or not they take place within school time, have a direct impact on the health and happiness of the intended victim. In the event that such bullying emanates from an individual or group within the School, the perpetrators will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **5.0 RAISING AWARENESS OF BULLYING**

- 5.1 The School intends to make pupils aware that bullying is not an inevitable part of school life. This is achieved by:
- Educating pupils to an awareness of what bullying is in its range and depth through, the opportunities which arise in the curriculum, the PSHE Programme, through assemblies, and the general ethos of the school etc.
  - Indicating how they as pupils are to respond to it as victims and as members of a community which stands against bullying.
  - Providing them with the support system to which they can turn in cases of bullying;
  - Supporting any pupil who is the victim of bullying.
  - Allowing pupils to feel confident that the bullying will be acted upon swiftly to curtail the problem.
  - Raising staff awareness of the nature, range and response to be made to bullying and its victims.
  - Raising the awareness of parents to the serious commitment of the school to act on bullying issues and thus gain their confidence in dealing with the issues when they materialise.

We also raise awareness of staff through training, so that the principles of the anti-bullying policy are understood, legal responsibilities are known, action is defined to resolve and prevent problems and sources of support are available. Where appropriate we can invest in specialised skills to understand the needs of the students, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGB&T) students.

## **6.0 PUPILS' RESPONSE TO BULLYING**

- 6.1 A pupil who is being bullied should always tell someone. Pupils are advised that bullying will rarely go away of its own accord; they are reassured that the situation will not be made worse by reporting it and are commended for taking positive action in telling a teacher.
- 6.2 The guidelines given to pupils are as follows:
- be proud of who you are; it is good to be individual
  - tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied, bullying is wrong
  - try not to show that you are upset; it is hard, but a bully often thrives on someone's fear
  - be assertive; walk away confidently and go straight to a member of staff
  - do not fight back - this may make things worse.
- 6.3 If a pupil knows that someone else is being bullied, they are expected to take some action. Doing nothing may be interpreted as being on the side of the bully and could make the victim feel even more unhappy and isolated. Appropriate action might include some of the following:
- speaking out at the time
  - speaking sympathetically to the victim at a suitable moment and offering support
  - telling a teacher what has been seen or heard.

## **7.0 GUIDANCE TO STAFF**

### **7.1 Procedures**

- In the first instance the incident should be reported to an adult, preferably the teacher and they will deal with the matter appropriately, deciding whether it is a natural 'childhood falling out' or a case of bullying. (see Positive Behaviour Code)
- If the behaviour has been acknowledged as bullying the class teacher should:
- Talk with both parties.
- Complete an incident form and apply appropriate behaviour sanctions.
- Ensure the incident form is placed in the Incident File in the School Office.

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- Inform Principal and/ or Deputy Head
- Inform the Designated Safeguarding Leads for Child Protection – Mrs Chrissi Sharkey (DSL), Dr Beth Reynaert (DDSL), Mr Luke Allen (DDSL), Mrs Jane Fairbairn (DDSL).
- The child should be told that their parents will be informed.
- A member of the Senior Leadership Team should make a note in their diary to review the situation in a fortnight's time.
- Another half termly check should be made.
- Class teacher may use PSHE time to discuss issues the incident has raised.
- If there is another incident of bullying the class teacher should inform the SLT immediately and they should contact the parents.
- If the bullying persists both sets of parents will be invited to have a meeting with the Principal and class teacher. If appropriate the children involved will also be present at the meetings. The outcome of these meetings will be documented and dated. Further sanctions and review dates will be established.

7.2 Throughout the process staff should:

- Make the individual (pupil/parent) feel at ease and supported.
- Give them time to explain the situation. Listen carefully.
- Make notes on the nature of the incident. Be sure to repeat detail or question specifics in order to gain a full knowledge of the incident. Dates, times and nature of the incidents are significant details to be ascertained.
- Establish whether there are other pupils who can corroborate the account given and who may be able to act as witnesses. Establish if there may have been any provocation on the part of the victim.
- Do not make any immediate judgement. Do not offer an opinion on either the detail or the individuals who may be named as being the bullies.
- The professional response must come only after impartial investigation of the incident.
- Make it clear that the problem will be treated seriously, reassure the individual that you will investigate the incident as a matter of urgency.

## 8.0 PARENTS'/GUARDIANS' RESPONSE TO BULLYING

It is incumbent on Our Lady's Abingdon to have clear policies which are communicated to parents, students and staff, along with creating an environment of good behaviour and respect, with helpful examples set by staff and older students. Integral to our policy is involving parents and making sure students are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders.

Parents/guardians can help by:

- Regularly encouraging their son or daughter to talk about their day and asking questions as appropriate.
- Being sensitive to any unusual behaviour in their son or daughter such as a reluctance to attend school, feeling ill regularly, or not completing work to their normal standard.
- Informing their son or daughter's Class Teacher immediately if they feel their son/daughter may be a victim of bullying. We want to know as soon as possible, even if it does turn out to be a false alarm.
- Giving reassurance to their son or daughter if they are being bullied e.g. by telling them that they are not in the wrong and encouraging them to ask for help.
- Reminding their son/daughter of the School policy concerning bullying and the support they will receive from staff.

## 9.0 THE SCHOOL'S RESPONSE TO BULLYING

9.1 OLA addresses the issue of bullying mainly via PSHE, but also in RE and sometimes other lessons, form registration time and occasionally in assemblies, collective worship and/or circle time

9.2 In PSHE, it will:

- Discuss aspects of bullying and the appropriate ways to deal with threatening behaviour.
- Encourage pupils to discuss how they relate to other people and how they can form positive attitudes towards others.
- Review the nature of friendship.

9.4 If bullying is suspected a member of staff will talk with some or all of the following:

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- the suspected victim
- the suspected bully
- any witnesses.

- 9.3 The victim is supported in one or more of the following ways; by:
- Offering them an immediate opportunity to talk further about the experience with an appropriate person.
  - Informing their parents/guardians and involving them fully in the resolution of the situation.
  - Helping to rebuild confidence, by giving reassurance and praising the courage shown.
  - Arranging for support to be given in situations where they feel it is needed.
  - Taking one or more of the disciplinary procedures described in 10.0 to prevent further bullying.
- 9.4 The bully is supported in one or more of the following ways; by:
- Listening and talking to them to discover the reason(s) for the incident(s).
  - Informing their parents/guardians and involving them fully in the resolution of the situation.
  - Offering counselling to the bully if appropriate and continuing to support them as necessary to prevent further bullying.
- 9.5 The school will keep on checking with the affected parties to see if the bullying has continued or stopped. If it has not stopped, further investigation and intervention will take place.
- 9.6 Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a pupil is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm or abuse, the perpetrator(s) and victim(s) will be considered to be 'at risk' and as such, the School's DSLs will seek advice from, and refer them to, local agencies as appropriate.

## 10.0 SANCTIONS

10.1 Our Lady's Abingdon's anti-bullying policy is dove-tailed with the Positive Behaviour policy (with support for the victim and the bully) and makes it clear what the sanctions are for bullying. We implement disciplinary sanctions which reflect the seriousness of an incident and convey a deterrent effect. If necessary strong sanctions, such as exclusion, would be used in cases of severe and persistent bullying.

- The bully may be warned officially to stop offending with more serious sanctions to follow any recurrence of bullying.
- Normal 'Behaviour Policy' sanctions will apply.
- Parents of both parties informed.
- A letter of apology should be written by the bully and a copy kept on file.
- Exclusion from the playground at break and lunch times.
- In severe cases they should be removed from the premises at these times and/or the bully may be temporarily excluded from School for a period of time at the discretion of the Principal.
- If the bully persists in such behaviour, or bullying is a recurring offence, he/she may be recommended for permanent exclusion (expulsion).

### ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS:

- Student Planner
- Positive Behaviour Code
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

### HELP ORGANISATIONS:

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)	0808 800 5793
Children's Legal Centre	0845 345 4345
KIDSCAPE Parents Helpline (Mon-Fri, 10-4)	0845 1 205 204
Parentline Plus	0808 800 2222
Youth Access	020 8772 9900
Bullying Online	<a href="http://www.bullying.co.uk">www.bullying.co.uk</a>
Beatbullying	0845 338 5060 or <a href="http://www.beatbullying.org">www.beatbullying.org</a>
Bullying online	<a href="http://www.bullying.co.uk">www.bullying.co.uk</a>

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## Appendix 1 – Cyber Bullying

**Cyber-Bullying:** is the use of ICT, particularly mobile electronic devices and the Internet, deliberately to upset someone else. Cyberbullying (along with all forms of bullying) will not be tolerated and incidents of cyberbullying should be reported and will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Anti-Bullying Policy. Use of electronic devices of any kind to bully, harass or intimidate others will not be tolerated and will constitute a serious breach of discipline. If there is a suggestion that a child is at risk of abuse or significant harm, the matter will be dealt with under the school's child protection procedures (see our Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy). Seven categories of cyber-bullying have been identified:

- **Text message bullying** involves sending unwelcome texts that are threatening or cause discomfort;
- **Picture/video-clip bullying via mobile phone cameras** is used to make the person being bullied feel threatened or embarrassed, with images usually sent to other people. 'Happy slapping' involves filming and sharing physical attacks;
- **Phone call bullying via mobile phone** uses silent calls or abusive messages. Sometimes the bullied person's phone is stolen and used to harass others, who then think the phone owner is responsible. As with all mobile phone bullying, the perpetrators often disguise their numbers, sometimes using someone else's phone to avoid being identified;
- **Email bullying** uses email to send bullying or threatening messages, often using a pseudonym for anonymity or using someone else's name to pin the blame on them;
- **Chat room bullying and online grooming** involve sending menacing or upsetting responses to students or young people when they are in a web-based chat room;
- **Bullying through instant messaging (IM)** is an Internet-based form of bullying where students and young people are sent unpleasant messages through various messaging applications (for example, WhatsApp, Group Me, Skype, Facebook Messenger, Snapchat, Google Hangouts etc.) as they conduct real-time conversations online;
- **Bullying via websites and social networks (an example of this would be Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)** includes the use of defamatory blogs, personal websites and online personal polling sites. There has also been a significant increase in social networking sites for young people, which can provide new opportunities for cyber-bullying.

Students should remember the following:

- Always respect others - be careful what you say online and what images you send.
- Think before you send - whatever you send can be made public very quickly and could stay online forever.
- Don't retaliate or reply online.
- Save the evidence - learn how to keep records of offending messages, pictures or online conversations. Ask someone if you are unsure how to do this. This will help to show what is happening and can be used by the school to investigate the matter.
- Block the bully. Most social media websites and online or mobile services allow you block someone who is behaving badly.
- Don't do nothing - if you see cyberbullying going on, support the victim and report the bullying.