



**ST MARGARET'S**  
SCHOOL

*Anti-Bullying Policy*

# ST MARGARET'S

SCHOOL

## Anti-Bullying Policy Review:

Review Date	September 2025
Reviewed By	Julie Chatkiewicz - Vice Principal
Next Review Date	September 2026
Approval Date	September 2025

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## **Aims and Objectives**

At St Margaret's School ("the School"), our community is based upon respect, good manners, and fair play. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence, and any form of harassment so that every one of our pupils can develop to their full potential. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and cooperation so that they can learn in a relaxed, but orderly, atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other, inside and outside of School.

The School prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting the School in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that there are consistent expectations of behaviour both at school, online and at home, and that the School and parents cooperate closely together.

This policy is available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils on our website and on request. It is also communicated to all staff and pupils.

Bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination of pupils or staff will not be tolerated by the School. We treat all of our pupils and their parents fairly, and with consideration, and we expect them to respect the staff, the School and each other, in return. All forms of bullying are unacceptable at the School (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying) and any instances of bullying will be recorded and, where appropriate, will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the School's Behaviour Policy.

Our policy is positive rather than punitive. Our ethos is one that respects the individual and encourages both bullied and witnesses to speak out. We seek to support pupils who feel they have been bullied while helping bullies to change their behaviour.

This policy applies to all day and boarding pupils in the School, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and applies to actions undertaken both inside, and outside of the School.

## **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.

Put another way, bullying is the intentional hurting, harming, or humiliating of another person. It may take many forms, including physical (including any threat of or use of violence of any kind), sexual (including the sharing of nudes/semi-nudes), verbal (including cyberbullying via text messages, email, social media, gaming, or other instant messages, and can include the use of images and video), and/or emotional (including by excluding, being sarcastic, name calling, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone, or actions that fall short of direct participation, where someone encourages others to bully, or joins in with laughing at a victim. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidating, and often involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator(s) and the victim(s) whether that be a physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), or intellectual imbalance, or by the perpetrator(s) having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate the victim(s).

Bullying can sometimes amount to child on child abuse, which is defined as abuse by one or more pupils against another pupil. It can be standalone or as part of wider abuse and can happen both inside and outside of school, and online. Further information about child on child abuse, including the procedures to follow when an incident of child on child abuse is reported can be found in the School's Safeguarding Policy.

Bullying is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, and may involve actions or comments regarding a person's race, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, special education needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain health conditions, or because of a child's familial circumstances, such as they are adopted, in care or that they have caring responsibilities. Bullying may be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. For example, bullying can still be homophobic if directed towards a child that is perceived to be gay, whether or not this is the case.

Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time and can involve anyone - pupils, other young people, staff, and parents.

Where an incident of bullying causes or is likely to cause significant harm to a pupil, the School will follow the procedures set out in the School's Safeguarding Policy.

## **The School's Response to Bullying**

At the School, we always treat bullying very seriously. It conflicts sharply with the School's social and moral principles, and potentially with its policy on equal opportunities for pupils and will not be tolerated. When incidents of bullying do occur, they are dealt with quickly and taken seriously. The School will never dismiss or downplay bullying as banter or horseplay, and all reported incidents of bullying will be dealt with by staff in accordance with this policy. Staff will reassure any victim(s) that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

The School understands that bullying can be so serious that it may cause physical, emotional, and psychological damage, such as eating disorders, self-harm and even suicide. Stopping violence and ensuring the immediate physical safety of pupils is the School's first priority, however, the School acknowledges that emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical bullying, and therefore staff will use their discretion when dealing with an incident of bullying within the parameters of this policy and the Behaviour Management Policy. Whilst bullying itself is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment, sexual violence and assault, sexting, the sharing of nudes/semi-nudes (in certain circumstances), upskirting and to violent and threatening behaviour. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying: everybody has the right to be treated with respect.

The School recognises that children with SEND or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges and may be more prone to peer on peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children. The School also recognises that certain children may face additional barriers to reporting an incident because of their vulnerability, disability, sex, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation.

Pupils who are victims of bullying will always be supported and will be reassured that they will be kept safe. Pupils who have engaged in bullying behaviour will be subject to appropriate disciplinary sanction and will also, where possible, be supported in learning different ways of behaving and offered support for their own circumstances, where appropriate.

Bullying which occurs on School trips, online, or outside of the School's premises will not be tolerated any more than bullying on School premises. Teachers will, where appropriate, discipline pupils for misbehaviour online, outside School premises and outside School hours.

## **Signs of Bullying**

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- unwillingness to return to school, to attend certain lessons or to go to specific areas of school;
- displays of excessive anxiety, fear, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet;
- failure to produce work, or producing unusually poor work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with, or spoilt by others;
- books, bags, money, and other belongings suddenly go "missing", or are damaged;
- change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary);
- diminished levels of self-confidence;
- frequent visits to the Welfare Centre with symptoms which may relate to stress or anxiety, such as stomach pains or headaches;
- unexplained cuts and bruises;
- frequent absence, erratic attendance, or late arrival to class;
- choosing the company of adults rather than peers;
- displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact;
- difficulty in sleeping or experiencing nightmares; or
- talking of suicide or running away from home or school.

Although there may be other causes of some of the above symptoms, a repetition or combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers and reported / recorded, as appropriate, in accordance with this policy.

## **Bullying - Preventative Measures**

The School's response to bullying does not start at the point in which a pupil has been bullied. We take the following preventative measures in order to create an environment that prevents bullying from becoming a problem at the School in the first place:

### **Pupils**

- The School promotes an ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat each other with respect at all times, inside and outside of school;
- All new pupils (including boarders and EYFS pupils) are briefed thoroughly on the School's expected standards of behaviour. They are told what to do if they encounter bullying. We guarantee that those who report bullying in good faith will not be punished, will be taken seriously, and will be supported and kept safe;
- We use appropriate assemblies to explain the School's policy on bullying (including cyberbullying and prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying). Our PSHE programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the School. The programme is structured to enforce messages about community involvement and taking care of each other. It focuses on the importance of equality and diversity and pupils are encouraged to avoid prejudicial and exclusionary language;
- Other lessons highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by developing social skills and by teaching moral and spiritual values that show all bullying to be unacceptable;
- All of our pupils are encouraged to tell any member of staff at once if they are being bullied, or if they know or suspect that bullying is taking place. They are reassured that they will be taken seriously and will be supported and kept safe;
- All boarders know how to report anxieties to a member of the House Staff team or to another member of the wider pastoral team of the School;
- We operate a peer counselling scheme whereby trained older pupils are encouraged to offer advice and support to younger pupils;
- The School buildings and our boarding house display/s advice on where pupils can seek help, including details of confidential helplines and websites where they can connect with external specialists, such as ChildLine, Kidscape, Bullying UK, and the Samaritans;
- We provide leadership training to our Head of School and their team of prefects which specifically covers the importance of offering support and assistance to younger and to vulnerable pupils; and
- The School does not tolerate peer-group "initiation ceremonies" or hazing type violence or rituals designed to cause pain, anxiety or humiliation to pupils, and all staff remain alert to such actions.

### **Staff**

- Upon induction, all new members of staff are given training and guidance on the School's anti-bullying policy and on how to react to, and record allegations of bullying at the School, including cyberbullying. The School will ensure that all School staff understand the principles of the School's policy, the School's legal responsibilities, actions to be taken to resolve and prevent incidents of bullying from arising or escalating and also details of sources of further support;
- The School recognises that certain children may be more at risk of bullying than others and may require additional support when dealing with an incident of bullying, for example children with SEND and/or certain health conditions, and LGBTQ+ pupils. The School will ensure that staff receive appropriate training to be able to understand the specific needs of our pupils, and to enable all staff to provide an inclusive environment for all pupils;
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents. Records of any incidents are kept securely on the appropriate safeguarding system in order that patterns of behaviour can be identified and monitored. These are printed and reviewed by SMT and HoYs;
- We have a strong and experienced pastoral team of Tutors and Heads of Year, and Boarding Staff who support the Vice Principal and are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority, and who are alert to possible signs of bullying and will know when to apply our Safeguarding Policy to bullying incidents;
- Our pastoral team gives support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both victims and bullies. INSET sessions are held regularly, using outside experts;

- Our trained School Counsellor is an important part of our pastoral support service, providing specialist skills of assessment and counselling. The Counsellor is available to give confidential advice and counselling support to pupils who can refer themselves to the Counsellor when they have social, emotional, or behavioural concerns. On occasion, a member of our pastoral team may refer a pupil to the Counsellor as appropriate;
- Staff are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class and patrol the School site, particularly areas where bullying might occur. They are trained to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour at all times;
- In the Boarding House, there is a strong team of tutors who support the House Staff Team, who act in loco parentis. Staff are aware that the Boarding House provides more opportunities for bullying and are therefore always vigilant and alert to signs of issues with or between boarders. The informal house environment is important in reinforcing a pupil's standards and values, providing the opportunity for friendly, informal discussion of matters of concern to the individual pupil outside the formal classroom. A member of the boarding house staff is always on duty to supervise the pupils. The School will comply with its obligations as set out in the National Minimum Standards at all times;
- The School has the right, and duty, to investigate incidents of bullying involving our pupils which take place outside School hours, on School visits and trips, online, or that otherwise occur outside of School. The School has the right to take disciplinary measures in respect of such incidents. Disciplinary measures will be taken in accordance with the School's Behaviour Management Policy and will be applied in a fair, consistent, and reasonable manner, considering the needs of pupils with SEND and certain health conditions, and vulnerable pupils; and
- Staff will always consider the motive behind bullying behaviour and whether it raises any concerns for the welfare of the perpetrator(s). If staff reasonably suspect that a pupil may be suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, they should follow the procedures set out in the School's Safeguarding Policy and discuss their concerns with the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) without delay.

## **Parents**

- This policy is readily available on the School's website so that they are clear on the School's approach to bullying and what to do if their child experiences bullying;
- We encourage close contact between the pastoral team and parents/ guardians, and will always make contact if we are worried about a pupil's well-being;
- If parents know or suspect that their child, or another pupil, is being bullied, they should contact the School without delay. All concerns will be taken seriously; and
- We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures and all other aspects and implementation of this anti-bullying policy.

## **Procedures for Dealing with Reported Bullying**

The School ensures that all instances of, or concerns about bullying and cyberbullying, both on and away from School premises are easy to report and that they are recorded properly. Records of instances of bullying and allegations of bullying will be kept on the appropriate safeguarding system.

Records will also be kept on the appropriate system relating to safeguarding where appropriate, in order to enable the School to identify patterns of behaviour and to evaluate the effectiveness of this Anti-Bullying Policy.

The School recognises that pupils are likely to report bullying to someone they trust: this could be any member of staff. The School also recognises that children may not find it easy to tell staff about bullying verbally and that instead they may show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice and react to. It is also recognised that an incident may come to a member of staff's attention through a report of a friend, or by overhearing conversations. All staff will be trained in handling an allegation and will be aware that they must listen to the pupil, not ask leading questions, and make a written record of the allegation to the best of their ability.

The School also recognises that a first disclosure to a trusted adult may only be the first incident reported. It is not necessarily representative of a singular incident. Staff will take all reports seriously regardless of how long it has taken for the child to come forward. Staff will act immediately and will support the victim(s) when they raise a concern.

If an incident of bullying is reported, the following procedure will be adopted:

1. The member of staff to whom the incident was reported, or who first discovers the situation, will control the situation (the "Investigating Officer"), and will reassure and support the pupils involved, without promising absolute confidentiality;
2. The Investigating Officer will inform an appropriate member of the School's pastoral team about the bullying allegation as soon as possible;
3. A clear account of the incident (including date, time and nature) will be recorded on the online reporting system which alerts the DSL who will assess the incident and will pass it on for investigation to the Head of the Junior School (Reception – Year 6) or the Head of Year of the suspected bully and the victim, the Vice Principal, and Head will be copied in;
4. Where an issue of pupil behaviour or bullying gives 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm', staff should follow the procedures set out in the School's Safeguarding Policy rather than the procedure set out below;
5. The victim(s) and the alleged perpetrator(s) will each be interviewed individually by the Investigating Officer on their own (or, if appropriate, with a suitable person present for support) and asked to write their account of events;
6. Where the Investigating Officer considers that the reported bullying behaviour may be criminal or considers that there may be a risk of harm to someone, the Case Handler will discuss this with the Head, and will report the matter to the Police without delay, if considered necessary. The School will then follow the procedures set out in the Safeguarding Policy as well as any guidance from the Police;
7. The incident/s should be recorded on the appropriate safeguarding system where it will be stored securely;
8. The Vice Principal will inform the tutors, Head of Year and the Boarding team of both the alleged perpetrator(s) and the victim(s) through including them in the online system team. In very serious incidents, the Head should be informed;
9. The victim(s) will be interviewed again at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the alleged perpetrator(s). They will be offered support to develop a strategy to help. It will be made clear to them why revenge or retaliation is inappropriate;
10. The perpetrator(s) will be interviewed again at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the victim(s), and it will be made clear why their behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. They will be offered guidance on modifying their behaviour. The School's Behaviour Management Policy may also be invoked. Sanctions under the Behaviour Management Policy might include, for example, detention and withdrawal of privileges. The School may exclude a pupil, either temporarily or permanently, in cases of serious or persistent bullying, or in the event that the support put in place for the perpetrator(s) does not result in the modification of behaviour to an acceptable level;
11. The parents/ guardians of all parties will be informed and may be invited into School to discuss the matter, and the appropriate sanctions under the Behaviour Management Policy. The parents' support will be sought in respect of preventative measures, and any concerns of either party will be addressed;
12. A way forward, including where appropriate disciplinary sanctions and support for the perpetrator(s), should be determined, and where possible agreed with all parties. This should recognise that suitable support may be needed by the pupils who are being bullied, and also by the pupils who bully others, as well as dealing with disciplinary measures in accordance with the School's Behaviour Management Policy if appropriate;
13. As part of this process, a meeting involving all the parties, with close staff supervision, may be convened to help develop a strategy which enables all concerned to close the episode;
14. A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place and put on record;
15. In very serious cases, and only after the DSL and the Head have been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police, and/or to Children's Services. However, in many cases it will be possible to resolve such issues internally under this policy and the School's Behaviour Management Policy.

## Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can be defined as "the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others" (Belsey, <http://www.cyberbullying.org/>). It is an aggressive, intentional act often carried out repeatedly over time, and



often against a victim who cannot easily defend themselves. The School acknowledges that cyberbullying may take place inside School, outside of School and at any time of the day.

Cyberbullying could involve communications by various electronic media, including for example:

- texts, instant messages or calls on mobile phones;
- the use of mobile phone camera images to cause distress, fear, or humiliation;
- posting threatening, abusive, sexual, discriminatory, offensive, or humiliating material or comments on websites (including blogs, personal websites, and social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or YouTube);
- using e-mail to message others in a threatening or abusive manner; or
- hijacking / cloning email accounts.

The School acknowledges that cyberbullying may take many different forms including cyberstalking, exclusion or peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorised publication of private information or images, encouraging derogatory comments on online platforms, sharing nudes/semi-nudes, upskirting, and sexting.

The School has a role to play in teaching pupils about the underpinning knowledge and behaviours that can help them to navigate the online world safely and confidently regardless of the device, platform, or app. In taking this forward, the School has regard to the DfE's non statutory guidance on Teaching online safety in school (June 2019).

## **Prevention of Cyberbullying**

For the prevention of cyberbullying, in addition to the measures described above, the School:

- expects all pupils to adhere to its E-Safety Policy. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our IT Department monitors pupils' use;
- may impose disciplinary sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse, of the internet in accordance with the Behaviour Management Policy;
- issues all pupils with their own personal School email address. Access to social media sites and personal email sites such as "hotmail" is not allowed from School computers/ tablets inside the School;
- offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying in PSHE lessons, which covers blocking, removing contacts from "friend" lists and sharing their personal data;
- ensures its pupils are aware of the various forms in which cyberbullying can take place, that it can have severe and distressing consequences, and that participation in cyberbullying will not be tolerated;
- offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details private and secure;
- does not allow the use of mobile phones use in lessons apart from where explicit permission is given, public areas of the School, or where they may cause annoyance, humiliation, or distress to others; and
- does not allow the use of cameras/ mobile phone cameras in toilets, washing and changing areas or for the use of recording or taking photographs in the bedrooms of boarding houses.

## **Procedures for Dealing with Cyberbullying**

The School will follow the procedures set out in this policy and in the Safeguarding Policy where relevant for incidents of cyberbullying, taking such disciplinary action that is considered reasonable in the circumstances, with a view to regulating pupil conduct and protecting the reputation of the School, and the welfare of its pupils.

Although cyberbullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are however criminal laws that may apply to communications of a harassing or threatening manner or the unauthorised publication of private images, upskirting, sharing nudes/semi-nudes, and sexting. Where the School considers that a reported incident of cyberbullying may amount to a criminal offence, it will inform the Police.

## **Electronic Devices**

In response to an allegation of cyberbullying, certain staff are permitted to conduct a search for electronic devices, such as a pupil's mobile phone, with the authority of the Head. Staff do not require the consent of the pupil, or their parents to undertake a search, provided they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil is in possession of a prohibited item, or an item that has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence, or to cause personal injury to any person (including the pupil being searched), or cause damage to property, and provided they have the Head's prior consent to undertake a search.

The search will be conducted in accordance with the procedure as set out in the Behaviour Management Policy.

Where a search finds an electronic device that is prohibited by the School rules, or where the member of staff undertaking the search reasonably suspects that the electronic device has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence or cause personal injury or damage to property, the School may examine any data or files on the device, where there is good reason to do so, for example, where there has been an allegation of cyberbullying. Parental consent to search through electronic devices is not required but they will be informed after the event unless doing so presents a further risk to any child.

The School may also erase any data or files from the device if the School considers there to be good reason to do so, unless there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the device may contain evidence in relation to a criminal offence, where the files should not be deleted and the device must be given to the Police without delay.

If, following a search, the member of staff determines that the device does not contain any evidence in relation to a criminal offence, or are advised by the Police following a report to them that they will not take any further action to investigate an alleged offence, the School can decide whether it is appropriate to delete any files or data from the device, and may retain the device as evidence of a breach of this policy and the Behaviour Management Policy and the School rules. The School may then take steps to punish the student in accordance with the Behaviour Management Policy, where appropriate. In the event that the search highlights a safeguarding concern in respect of any pupil, the School will follow the procedures set out in the School's Safeguarding Policy.

The School will keep a record of all searches carried out, including the results of any search, and the actions taken following that search.

## **EYFS Children**

Even the School's youngest children are encouraged to behave towards each other with kindness and consideration. They are encouraged to learn to look after their own possessions and to respect others' possessions. We expect them to be honest, helpful, and polite, and to work hard and to listen to others. They should respect everyone and learn to value differences and diversity. The Head of Junior School and EYFS, is in charge of the management of behaviour in the EYFS setting.

We explain to our EYFS children why some forms of behaviour are unacceptable and hurtful to others. We rarely need to impose sanctions in the EYFS setting; but sometimes we may remove a privilege for hurtful behaviour. Occasionally, a child may be sent to see the Head, who will explain the inappropriateness of a particular action and introduce a more appropriate action; but such instances are rare. Parents are always informed when any sanction or reproof is needed towards their child, and in cases of repeated instances of hurtful or inappropriate behaviour, parents will be invited into the School to discuss the situation with the child's teacher and the Head of EYFS, to agree on a joint way of handling the difficulty.

## **Complaints Procedure**

Parents and pupils are encouraged to use our Complaints Procedure (which is published on our website) if they feel that any concerns about bullying (or anything else) are not being addressed properly. Parents of boarders and of EYFS children should be aware that they have the right to refer a complaint directly to Ofsted, if they are unhappy with the way in which their complaint has been handled (the Complaints Procedure explains how to complain to Ofsted).

## **Monitoring and Review**

The School will record all incidents of reported bullying in accordance with this policy.

The Head together with SMT will review all incidents of reported bullying to help identify patterns of behaviour, so that the School can take appropriate steps to address bullying behaviours within the School. Records of bullying incidents will also be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the School's anti-bullying procedures, and to highlight any necessary amendments.

This policy is reviewed and updated at least annually, by the Governors.

## **APPENDIX 1 - Guidance for Pupils**

If you think that you are being bullied - never be afraid to ask for help from any member of staff, a prefect or a friend.

### **Pupil's guide to how to respond if you are being bullied**

If you are being bullied the following responses should help:

1. Explain to the bully that their words/actions are upsetting; they may not be aware of this. However, if the bullying continues try not to show your feelings.
2. Walk away quickly and confidently, even if you don't feel that way inside.
3. If you are different in any way, be proud of it – it's good to be an individual.
4. The bully will not stop if they think they can get away with such behaviour. Discuss the problem with your friends, tell a member of staff or ask your friends to tell a member of staff on your behalf.
5. If you do not want to talk to an adult in school or a member of your family, you can talk to the School's counsellor.

### **Pupil's guide to how to respond if you think someone is being bullied and how to prevent bullying**

You can help to stop bullying:

1. If the pupil being bullied is in any danger, fetch help. If they are not in danger your presence may ease the situation so remain together.
2. Show that you and your friends disapprove.
3. Give sympathy and support to others who may be bullied.
4. Be careful about teasing or making personal remarks. If you think they might not find your comments funny don't say them.
5. If you know of serious bullying, tell someone. The victim may be too scared or lonely to tell.

### **Other sources of help and support**

School Counsellor

Welfare Officer: Claire Weldon

Children's Commissioner: 0800 528 0731 or [www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)

Childline: 0800 1111 or [www.childline.org](http://www.childline.org)

### **Guidance for Parents - Parental Involvement**

Whenever a serious case of bullying is uncovered the parents or guardian of both the victim and the bully would normally be informed either in writing or by personal contact.

#### **If your child is being bullied**

Parents along with peers will probably be the first to hear of a bullying incident. Parents should contact their child's Form Tutor, Head of Year, Vice Principal or Head if they are worried.

It is essential to stay calm, supportive and find out the facts of the situation; a situation of alleged bullying can be complex to understand as it is possible that the parties involved with have varying perceptions of the events under investigation. Reassurance will be needed to persuade your child that they have done the right thing by telling you. You may find it helpful to have the following checklist at your side to ensure that correct information is passed to the School:

- Who was involved?
- Where did it take place, when and how often?
- Why did it take place?
- What form did the bullying take?

When you inform the School of these details, you will be told how the School will proceed. The procedures set out in this policy will be followed and we will work with you as required, keeping you informed of action taken. Be reassured that this will be managed sensitively with the needs of all the pupils involved carefully considered.

## **If your child is involved in the bullying**

It is important to work with the school to modify the patterns of behaviour which are causing your child to bully. Do not panic and blame yourself. Acknowledge that these things do happen and the school has mechanisms in place to deal with this issue. It is helpful to recognise some of the reasons why pupils behave in this way from time to time.

Children sometimes bully others because:

- they are not aware of how hurtful it is;
- they are copying the behaviour of older siblings or people they admire;
- they have a temporary difficulty integrating in their peer group;
- they are bullying others because of encouragement from friends;
- they are going through a difficult time personally and need help;
- they have not yet learnt satisfactory ways for making firm relationships.

To stop your child from bullying others:

- talk with your child and help them to understand that what they are doing is unacceptable as it makes other pupils unhappy;
- discourage other members of the family from using aggressive behaviour to get what they want;
- suggest ways of joining in activities with other pupils without bullying;
- liaise with the School: Form Teacher, Head of Year, Vice Principal, or Head;
- make time to have regular chats about how things are going at school;
- check that your child has identified an adult at school to whom they can go to if they have a problem or a worry of any kind.

Please note that the School will want and need to take action if bullying occurs. The matter will be sensitively handled but it needs to be effective. Action will be taken in accordance with this policy, together with the procedures in the School's Behaviour Management and Safeguarding policies.

## **Guidance**

The DfE has published the following guidance document for parents:

Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/444865/Advice\\_for\\_parents\\_on\\_cyberbullying.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444865/Advice_for_parents_on_cyberbullying.pdf)

Other useful organisations providing support for parents dealing with specific bullying issues include:

[www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

[www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)

[www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

## **APPENDIX 2 - Anti-Cyberbullying Code: Advice to Pupils**

This code is intended to help pupils protect themselves from getting caught up in cyberbullying and to give advice about how to report it when it does happen. Seeing inappropriate comments about oneself on a website or being sent abusive or threatening text messages can cause considerable upset.

### **1. Respect other people**

Remember that when you send a message to someone, you cannot see the impact that your words or images may have on the other person. That is why it is important to always show respect to people and be careful what you say online or what images you send. What you think is a joke may really hurt someone else. Always ask permission before you take a photograph of someone or post online. You also need to think before you allow someone to take your photograph as it may be used by them at a later date without your permission.

If you receive a rude or nasty message or picture about someone else, do not forward it. You could be assisting a bully and even yourself be accused of cyberbullying. You could also be breaking the law.

### **2. Think first before you send**

It is important to think before you send any images or text about yourself or someone else by email or mobile phone, or before you post information on a website. Remember that what you send can be made public very quickly and could stay online forever. Parents, teachers, friends or future employers may be able to access photographs in years to come.

Remember that even if you are sending messages in non-school time this code of conduct still applies.

### **3. Protect your password**

Take care to ensure that other people do not know your passwords. It is a good idea to change them on a regular basis and you are advised not to use obvious passwords like your name or your date of birth. Choosing hard-to-guess passwords with symbols or numbers will help stop people hacking into your account and pretending to be you. It is also sensible to give your mobile phone number only to trusted friends.

### **4. Block the Bully**

Most responsible websites and services allow you to block or report someone who is behaving badly.

### **5. Don't retaliate or reply**

Replying to bullying messages, particularly in anger, may well be what the bully wants and can easily escalate matters very quickly.

### **6. Save the evidence**

It is important to keep records of offending messages, pictures or online conversations. If you are intending to make a complaint, this will help you demonstrate to others what is happening and can be used by the School, Internet service provider, mobile phone company, or even the police to investigate the cyberbullying.

### **7. Make sure you report incidents of cyberbullying**

You have a right not to be harassed and / or being bullied online and you should report incidents of cyberbullying which take place. If you think someone has created a false account to bully you from then report the account to the website.

There are people who may be able to help:

- You should tell your Form Tutor, Head of Year, Head of section, Housemistress, the Head of the Junior School, the Vice Principal, the Welfare Officer or any other member of staff, who will be able to advise you on this.
- The provider of the service you have been bullied on (e.g. your mobile phone operator or social network provider). Check their websites to see where to report.

- If you are unable to make progress with the areas listed above, you could call helpline, such as Childline on 0800 1111.
- Finally, it should be kept in mind that the School may take a view upon any items published, by any means, if those items could bring the School into disrepute. This is not confined to term-time only.

### **Help Organisations:**

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) 0300 0115 142

Children's Legal Centre 0345 345 4345

Childline 0800 1111

KIDSCAPE Parents Helpline (Mon-Thurs, 9-1pm) 020 7823 5430

Family Lives (Parentline Plus) 0808 800 2222

Youth Access 020 8772 9900

Bullying Online [www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre [www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk)

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

*See also:*

*Safeguarding Policy*

*Pupil Code of Conduct (Behaviour Management Policy)*

### **APPENDIX 3 - Anti-Bullying Specialist Organisations**

**The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA):** A network of 100 organisations, founded in 2002 by NSPCC and National Children's Bureau.

**Beatbullying:** A bullying prevention charity with an emphasis on working directly with children and young people. Beatbullying have developed the Cybermentors peer support programme for young people affected by cyberbullying.

**Kidscape:** Charity established to prevent bullying and promote child protection. Advice for young people, professionals and parents about different types of bullying and how to tackle it.

**ChildNet International:** Specialist resources for young people to raise awareness of online safety and how to protect themselves.

**Education Action Challenging Homophobia (EACH):** A charity and training agency helping people and organisations affected by homophobia.

**Schools Out:** An organisation which aims to promote equality, safety and visibility in education for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender students and all the protected characteristics.

**Diversity Role Models:** A charity championing inclusion within schools and wider society

**Ditch the Label:** An anti-bullying charity providing resources, campaigns and research on bullying trends globally.





[www.stmargarets-school.org.uk](http://www.stmargarets-school.org.uk)

Merry Hill Road, Bushey  
Hertfordshire, WD23 1DT  
United Kingdom

+44 (0)20 8416 4400  
[schooloffice@stmargarets-school.org.uk](mailto:schooloffice@stmargarets-school.org.uk)