



Our Lady's Preparatory School and Day Nursery

Anti-Bullying Policy 2.5

Background to the Policy – Aims and Objectives

We are proud of who we are and what we do and as a result, our ethos as a Catholic School is clear.

The School Values of respect, charity, joy, excellence, family and care are derived from Gospel values and the Virtues of the Church. We enable our children to live these values through positive action, both in school and in their own family and community.

At Our Lady's, 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 his/her full potential. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed; but orderly, atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other.

With this ethos in mind, our Anti Bullying policy has been developed principally taking into due consideration the following sources:

- Department for Education (DfE) "Preventing and tackling bullying" (July 2017)
- *Cyber Bullying: Advice for Headteachers and school staff (2014)* and *Advice for parents and carers on cyber-bullying (2014)*

Other sources have been used in preparing this policy and these are detailed in the References section at the end of this document. These include links to topics such as AI-generated images, the importance of filtering and monitoring

We pride ourselves on showing mutual respect and tolerance. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting the school and nursery in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together. Acceptance of this policy forms part of our standard terms and conditions. This policy is

available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils on our website and on request for perusal in the school office during the school day. It is also available and known to staff including junior and recently appointed staff.

Bullying, harassment and victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the school. This policy applies to all pupils in the school, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Definitions of Bullying

The following definitions of bullying are helpful in understanding the central tenets of our Anti-Bullying Policy:

“Bullying may be defined as: *Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally*”. (Source DfE “Preventing and tackling bullying”). However, bullying can be recognised as a ‘one-off event’ in certain circumstances.

Bullying is a “willful and conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone else” (Tattum & Herbert, 1990).

Bullying is “Behaviour by an individual or a group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally”.

As the above definitions attest, bullying is the intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another person by physical (including sexual), verbal (including email, chat room and SMS messages), and emotional means (by excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. Bullying is often hidden and subtle but can also be overt and intimidatory.

Bullying may involve actions or comments that are racist, sexual or sexist, homophobic, which focus on religion, cultural background, health conditions, disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape). Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time and can involve everyone - pupils, other young people, staff and parents.

Bullying may constitute or be associated with child-on-child abuse. Staff must be aware that child-on-child abuse can occur both inside and outside school and online. Any bullying incident which raises a safeguarding concern must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Deputy DSL and managed in accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. Staff must not assume that an absence of reports means that bullying or child-on-child abuse is not occurring.

Cyber-bullying

Bill Belsey, (<http://www.cyberbullying.org/>) defined this relatively modern and particularly intrusive phenomenon in the following way:

“willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices.”

Cyber-bullying is the use of various forms of technology, particularly mobile or smartphones and the Internet to seek to deliberately upset or even harm another person. It can be an extension of face-to-face bullying providing the bully with another route to harassing their target or cyber-bullying can exist as its own form of bullying, given it can subvert geographical and other barriers. Cyber-bullying can take the form of one or more of the following:

- threats and intimidation
- harassment or ‘cyber stalking’
- vilification, defamation, exclusion or rejection
- impersonation
- unauthorised publication of private information or images and manipulation.

Cyber-bullying can occur on social networking websites (social media, messaging services, gaming platforms, group chats, image/video sharing services and other online platforms), by email and by means of instant messaging (IM) services. This can occur on laptops and desktop computers, but also via tablets and mobile/smartphones, which can be used for SMS / instant messages and as cameras. Please see below for the School’s response to Bullying (which includes cyber-bullying and bullying on the basis of protected characteristics).

The School’s Response to Bullying

At Our Lady’s, we always treat bullying, including allegations of bullying, very seriously, especially in regard to protected characteristics (age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability, pregnancy or maternity). It conflicts sharply with the school’s policy on equal opportunities, as well as with its social and moral principles. Bullying can be so serious that it causes psychological damage, eating disorders, self-harm and even suicide, and, whilst bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws that apply to harassment and threatening behaviour. Bullying may be considered as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

Bullying or cyber-bullying in any form is unacceptable and will always be taken seriously, investigated and responded to appropriately. Staff will challenge any abusive behaviour that comes to their notice and will report on to the DSL immediately any issues of this nature. Please see the Safeguarding Policy for further details about dealing with child-on-child abuse.

Support for pupils with SEND and EAL is adapted to ensure accessibility. Reasonable adjustments are made where appropriate, and anti-bullying strategies are differentiated to reflect individual needs.

The school is conscious that children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities are a diverse population, potentially with a wide range of very different needs. For all such children with SEN and disabilities, discrimination based on their needs can be an additional challenge, as they may:

- be adversely affected by poor attitudes to disability and perceptions of being different;
- potentially find it harder to resist bullying;
- not necessarily understand that what is happening is actually bullying;
- find it difficult to tell adults about bullying.

Wider than SEND, other groups that may be at greater risk of harm include children who need a social worker, children absent from education, those requiring mental health support, those receiving elective home education, looked after children and previously looked after children, care leavers, young carers, LGBTQ+ and those questioning their gender.

Recognising the signs of Bullying

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

- Unwillingness to attend or return to school
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing or are damaged
- Change to established existing habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary)
- Diminished levels of self-confidence
- Frequent visits to the School office with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- Choosing the company of adults
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping, experiences nightmares
- Talking of running away or suicide

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of or a combination of these possible signs of bullying should always be investigated by parents and teachers.

Preventative Measures

We take the following preventative measures in order to ensure that bullying does not become a problem.

- All new pupils, including our youngest children are briefed thoroughly on the school's expected standards of behaviour. They are told what to do if they encounter bullying, which is to tell a teacher or another trusted adult or tell their parents who will in turn inform the school. We guarantee that whistle-blowers who act in good faith will not be penalised and will be fully supported.
- All new members of staff are given guidance on the school's anti-bullying policy and in how to react to allegations of bullying in the school. They are required to read the school's policy as part of their induction. We use appropriate assemblies to explain the school policy on bullying. Our PSHCEE and circle time give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the school - to enforce the message about community involvement and taking care of each other.
- Other lessons, particularly religious education (RE), personal, social, health and economic education (PSHCEE), English and drama highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by teaching and reinforcing moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable and by developing social skills.

- All our pupils are encouraged to tell a member of staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place. A witness (bystander) should tell a member of staff if they have witnessed a bullying incident.
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents and records of any incidents are kept securely in the school office in order that patterns of behaviour can be identified and monitored.
- Pupils are taught that bullying can have serious emotional/physical consequences and that bullying on the basis of protected characteristics is taken particularly seriously.
- Staff are always on duty at times when pupils/children are not in class or their rooms and patrol the school playground, particularly areas where bullying might occur. They are trained to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour.
- We reserve the right to investigate incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips and that occur in the vicinity of the school, involving our pupils
- We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures.
- Staff receive bullying training as part of their INSET provision.

Additional Preventative Measures in relation to cyber-bullying

In addition to the preventative measures described above, with respect to cyber-bullying specifically, the school:

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its guidance for the safe use of the internet. Certain sites, including all social media sites, are blocked by our filtering system and staff monitors pupils' Internet use.
- May impose sanctions for the misuse or attempted misuse of the Internet.
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyber-bullying in PSHE lessons, which covers blocking, removing contacts from "buddy lists" and sharing personal data.
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe.
- Does not allow children to bring in mobile phones or tablets unless express permission is granted by a member of the SLT. If permission is granted, phones or tablets are kept by a member of the SLT or the class teacher until the end of the day.
- Provides presentations by IT specialists to pupils' parents on the importance of e-safety.

Procedures for dealing with reported bullying

If an incident of bullying is reported, the following procedures are adopted:

- The member of staff to whom it was reported or who first discovers the situation, will control the situation, reassure and support the pupils/children involved.
- He/she will inform an appropriate member of the SLT as soon as possible.
- The member of staff will calmly explain the range of disciplinary measures that are potentially involved.
- The victim will be interviewed on his/her own and may be asked to write an account.

- The bully, together with all others who were involved, will be interviewed individually and asked to write (if they are able to) an immediate account of events.
- A record is kept in the Head's office of all incidents of bullying (including allegations), indicating the victims, bullies and outcome. In addition, all incidents of bullying are recorded as incident reports and kept in the pupil file of the accused child, so that the school can evaluate the effectiveness of its approach and enable patterns to be identified.
- The victim will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the SLT. This will occur separately from the alleged perpetrator. It will be made clear to him/her why revenge is inappropriate. He/she will be offered support to develop a strategy to help him or herself.
- The alleged bully will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the SLT, separately from the victim, and it will be made clear why his/her behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. He/she will be offered guidance on modifying his or her behaviour, together with any appropriate disciplinary sanctions as set out in the school's Behaviour Management Policy; for example, detention, withdrawal of privileges or suspension. In particularly serious and/or persistent cases, the bully should expect permanent exclusion.
- The parents/guardians of all parties should be informed and invited into school to discuss the matter. Their support should be sought.
- A way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and counselling, should be agreed.
- Where bullying raises safeguarding concerns or meets the threshold for significant harm, staff refer to the DSL immediately in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for children who are being bullied and for pupils who bully others, as well as dealing with appropriate disciplinary measures in accordance with the school's Behaviour Management Policy.

- A meeting involving all the parties, with close staff supervision, could be helpful in developing a strategy for all concerned to close the episode.
- A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place.
- In very serious cases and only after the Head has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the police or to the social services. The school may exclude a pupil, either temporarily or permanently, in cases of severe and persistent bullying and in the event that the support put in place for the bully does not result in the modification of behaviour to an acceptable level.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Children

From babies upwards, our children are encouraged to behave towards each other with kindness and consideration. They have to learn to look after their own possessions and to respect other's 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 Nursery Manager is in day-to-day charge of the management of behaviour in the Nursery department (with Reception Class being dealt with by the School SLT).

We explain to children why some forms of behaviour are unacceptable and hurtful to others. We rarely need to impose sanctions; but sometimes we may remove a treat for hurtful behaviour. Occasionally, a child may be sent to see the Head, who will explain the inappropriateness of a particular action. However, such instances are rare. Parents are always informed when any sanction or reproof is needed, and in cases of repeated instances of hurtful or inappropriate behaviour, they

will be invited into the school to discuss the situation with the Nursery Manager and the Head and to agree a joint way of addressing such behaviour and dealing with the difficulty.

Complaints Procedure

Parents and pupils are encouraged to use our Complaints Policy procedure (which is published on our web site) if they feel that their concerns about bullying (or other related matters) are not being addressed properly. Parents 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 Policy explains how to complain to Ofsted).

Monitoring & review

The School will review this policy every year and the guidance by the DFE, the Anti-Bullying Alliance and/or other relevant bodies will be monitored on an ongoing basis, in the event that ad-hoc amendments or revisions are appropriate beyond this timeframe.

Reviewed: 1 September 2026

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Boynes', written in a cursive style.

**D Boynes
Acting Head**

To be reviewed: 12 months from “Reviewed” date

Appendix 1

References and Related Policies

References

- 1) Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- 2) "Safe to Learn: Embedding Anti-Bullying Work in Schools" Department for Children, Schools & Families guidance document DCSF-00656-2007
- 3) "Preventing and tackling bullying" (Department for Education (DfE) Guidance published in October 2014, updated July 2017
- 4) Reference Guide to the key standards in each type of social care service inspected by Ofsted (Reference 080117) (www.ofsted.co.uk).
- 5) Education Act 2002
- 6) Education and inspection Act 2006
- 7) Independent Schools Standard Regulations 2014
- 8) Equality Act 2010
- 9) Education Act 2011 with regards to Cyber-bullying
- 10) DfE - Behaviour & Discipline in Schools- Guidance
- 11) DfE – Teaching online safety in schools- Guidance
- 12) DfE Independent School Standards Guidance, April 2026
- 13) The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework 2021 (www.ofsted.co.uk)
- 14) "Bullying": An ISC Child Health and Wellbeing Working Party Guidance Update Five
- 15) "Where You are NOT Alone" www.bullying.co.org
- 16) "Child Protection and New Technologies" by Childnet International <http://www.childnet-int.org>
- 17) Safe to Learn Tackling Cyber bullying
<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying>
- 18) "Guidance on e-strategies for schools, including technological bullying"
<http://schools.becta.org.uk/>
- 19) The UK Safer Internet Centre (www.saferinternet.org.uk)
- 20) CEOP's Thinkuknow website (www.thinkuknow.co.uk)
- 21) EYFS statutory framework
- 22) ISI Inspection Framework/Handbook, September 2026

Related Policies

The School has the following policies that are linked to the Anti-Bullying Policy:

- Special Education Needs (SEND) Policy
- Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Equal Opportunities
- Complaints Procedure
- Prevent Duty Policy
- E-safety Policy