

Bullying and Harassment

Reviewed:	April, 2024	Next Review:	April, 2027
Applies to:	Junior School, Girls' School, Boys' School		

1 Background

- 1.1 This policy needs to be read in conjunction with the school's Behaviour Management Policy and the Stand-down, Suspension and Expulsion Policy.
- 1.2 The Cathedral Grammar School is committed to providing a safe physical and emotional environment that is free from bullying and harassment for pupils, staff, and the school community (Education and Training Act 2020, Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, Employment Relations Act 2000, NELP Objective 1, Priority 1).
- 1.3 As a school we take all reasonable steps to eliminate bullying and harassment within our school and to respond effectively to concerns and complaints, and/or incidents. This is led through faith, hope and love, our special character, and our four pillars - everyone matters; do the right thing; think, try, reflect, and fearlessly aim high. We focus on a culture of care and protection and prioritise this when managing any bullying or harassment.
- 1.2 Our continuous endeavour is to strive for a school environment which is free of bullying behaviours. Given that bullying will almost always take place out of the view of staff, the school relies upon pupils and parents informing appropriate staff when bullying behaviour is experienced or witnessed.
- 1.3 Conflict between pupils is likely to be found in every school. Learning how to deal with conflict is a natural and inevitable part of the social learning of every child. As they are immature, children may, from time to time, use inappropriate means of resolving conflict, sometimes through actions which are physically or emotionally abusive. This is not bullying, but it does require remedial action by staff.
- 1.4 In most instances, intervention by staff will result in an immediate stop to bullying behaviour, a positive outcome for the victim of bullying and recovery of normal relationships over time. Where a pupil engages in repeated bullying behaviour, the response and consequences may need to become increasingly focussed. Heads of Department will inform the Principal. Where a pupil who engages in bullying does not respond positively to the measures taken, he/she may be removed from the school (refer Stand-down, Suspension and Exclusion Policy).
- 1.5 Constructive dialogue between the parents of pupils who are in conflict can be very effective in changing their respective children's behaviour. However, the degree of emotion involved in a bullying situation often means that such dialogue is best mediated through the staff of the school who may bring the parents of both parties together as part of the process of changing relationships.
- 1.6 Direct involvement, in which a parent interacts with another parent's child, is almost never useful in bringing about constructive behavioural change and may indeed make the situation worse. Despite strong desire to the contrary, parents of pupils who are victims of

bullying should refrain from any interaction with the alleged protagonist pupil in the school environment.

2 Objectives

- 2.1 To maintain a bully-free and safe school environment.
- 2.2 To maintain and enhance school-wide intolerance towards bullying and aggressive behaviour.
- 2.3 To provide pupils with appropriate resilience and skills to resist bullying and aggression by others.
- 2.4 To create procedures for the recovery of the self-esteem of the victims of bullying and for the behavioural modification of pupils who exhibit bullying behaviours.
- 2.5 To work in partnership with the parents of the pupils directly involved.

3 Definitions

3.1 Bullying is behaviour which is deliberate and can cause harm. Bullying is usually repeated or ongoing, and involves a misuse of power. It is acknowledged that the Work Safe definition of bullying includes behaviour that may not be deliberate and this should be considered when managing concerns of bullying involving staff.

3.2 Harassment is defined as a pattern of intimidating behaviour directed against another person that includes doing any specified act on at least two separate occasions within a period of 12 months. See the Harassment Act 1997 (s 3, 4).

Racial harassment is defined as harassment on the basis of race. See Human Rights Act 1993 (s 63) and the Employment Relations Act 2000 (s 109).

Sexual harassment is defined as behaviour of a sexual nature that is unwelcome or offensive to the person receiving it and repeated, or of such a significant nature, that it has a detrimental effect on that person. It may also describe an implied or explicit threat or promise that accepting or rejecting this sexual behaviour will affect a person's education or employment. See Human Rights Act 1993 (s 62) and the Employment Relations Act 2000 (s 108).

3.3 Conflict could include aggressive behaviour which does not meet the criteria for bullying (above) but which inevitably will be inappropriate in the school environment and must attract an appropriate response by staff.

4 Policy

4.1 All areas of the school will teach and model appropriate behaviours and the strategies/skills involved in conflict-resolution, positive assertiveness and intolerance of inappropriate bullying and aggression.

4.2 Programmes will be targeted to assist the following groups:

- **Bullies** – those who engage in bullying behaviour.
Programmes will teach pupils how to channel emotions appropriately, to empathise with other viewpoints, social skills and anger management.

- **Neutrals** – those who might otherwise not intervene where bullying is taking place. Programmes will teach pupils leadership, why and how to intervene appropriately when bullying or aggression takes place, how to make friends, tolerance, how and when to “tell”.
- **Victims** – those whose personality, social skills, social status and passivity make them possible targets for aggressive behaviour. Programmes will teach pupils appropriate assertiveness, how to make and keep friends, where one can go to feel safe and who one can trust when you feel bullied.

4.3 The regular monitoring of locker rooms, classrooms and more isolated areas of the playground during recesses is a vital task of the teacher-on-duty who needs to be proactive in ensuring that playground behaviour is appropriate.

4.4 Name-calling, ridicule, harassment, verbal abuse and put-downs (including the use of notes, social media, e-mail messages, text messages), physical abuse, interference with another’s possessions or exclusion of a class member from participation in playground games or groups will be treated by staff as serious breaches of acceptable behavioural standards.

4.5 We recognise that bullying can occur at school, outside of school and/or online. We aim to prevent online bullying by promoting safe and responsible use of technology.

4.6 Every reported incident of bullying will be investigated sympathetically, viewed as potentially serious and where confirmed, will be reported to the appropriate Head of Department, Deputy Principal, and/or the Principal.

4.7 The victim will be treated with empathy while the extent of the bullying is being investigated and, where appropriate, will be given suitable protection from retaliation. The parents of the pupils directly involved will be informed of any actions taken.

4.8 Appropriate action will be taken to assist any pupil found to be deliberately bullying another pupil to change this behaviour.

- Use of no-fault counselling, where appropriate, and the involvement of parents will be features of remedial action in instances of bullying.
- Recognition that the actions of the bullying child may in turn be a response by that child to emotional pressures in his/her environment will be part of the response by staff.

4.9 Following appropriate action by staff, the victim of bullying will be monitored on an on-going basis to ensure that the bullying has ceased.

5 Procedures

5.1 Interventions when bullying behaviour has occurred may include:

- Involvement of the parents of pupils
- Isolation and/or withdrawal of bully
- Empathy raising
- Reflection on School Pillars
- Opportunity for face-to-face apology and commitment to future
- Jeopardising of any kudos of the bully within his/her peer group
- Withdrawal of privileges

- Reporting programmes
- “No Blame Approach” (*see Appendix I*)
- Application of the provisions of the Stand-down, Suspension and Exclusion Policy

Appendix I: “No Blame Approach” procedures

Step	Purpose	Process
<p>1. Victim interviewed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The victim is reassured that the problem can be solved ● The main threatening figures, the “bullies” are identified ● Those present, but not actively involved, the “neutrals”, are identified ● Those whom the victim finds supportive, or would like to have as friends, are identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Accept all that is said, without questioning its validity ● Do not concentrate on feelings of victim ● Reassure victim that the problem can be solved ● Tell victim that a group of pupils will be asked to make him / her happier in school ● Elicit the names of “bullies”, “neutrals” and “supporters” if they have not already been mentioned
<p>2. Support Group selected</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Members of all three groups are selected ● All selected members understand why they have been selected ● No members feel that they have been pre-judged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Select 6 – 8 members for the support group including all main bullies and some neutrals and supporters ● See the group separately from the victim ● Reassure all members that they are not in trouble. No-one is to be labeled ● The group is told that X is unhappy at school and that they have been chosen because they can help – this is what they have in common ● The term “bullying” is avoided as it assumes pre-judgment ● Non- judgemental atmosphere is maintained with the group ● Parents of victim are informed of the process
<p>3. Empathy with victim sought</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Members of the group develop empathy for the victim 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Group is asked if they have ever been unhappy at school ● Feelings of victim not relayed to group ● When members provide examples, say “X must be feeling like that”
<p>4. Reasons sought for victim’s unhappiness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The group expresses their view of the problem in a non-judgemental atmosphere, thus owning the problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explain that X is unhappy at school and as they know X they probably know better than anyone why he/she is unhappy ● Seek responses – be non-judgmental. Maintain non-judgmental atmosphere by not allowing the use of names ● No punitive action can follow this discussion ● When members provide examples, say “X must be feeling like that”

Step	Purpose	Process
<p>5. The group makes suggestions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The group makes suggestions as to how X can be helped to be happy at school ● The group collectively owns the plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The members are asked to make suggestions ● No-one is asked to make promises nor are they given jobs ● The actual suggestions themselves are not significant except insofar as they demonstrate commitment to the group goal ● Inappropriate suggestions can be gently rejected
<p>6. Responsibility for implementation passed to the group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The group is given responsibility for the implementation of the plan – and its success ● This is a critical step 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The group is thanked for their support ● The plan is praised ● The members are told that they will report back all they have managed to do in a week's time at the review meeting ● A time for the review meeting is made
<p>7. Review meetings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The situation is reviewed with victim ● The situation is reviewed with the support group ● Further review meetings are scheduled as necessary – maximum of two 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Victim is interviewed separately ● Members of the support group express how they think things are with X, and what they have done to help ● Members are thanked for their contributions ● Members are asked if they are willing to continue for a second week ● A second review is arranged ● Parents of victim are kept informed of process results ● Support group members rewarded for involvement

Reference: Research demonstrating very high effectiveness rates for this approach and a theoretical framework for its success can be found in an article, “The Support Group Approach to Bullying in Schools”, *Educational Psychology in Practice*, Vol 14, No. 1, April 1998.