



ARCHBISHOP
MCGRATH CATHOLIC
HIGH SCHOOL

CHALLENGING BULLYING POLICY

OUR VISION

‘Christ at the Centre’

Our core purpose is to ensure that all pupils reach or exceed their potential by using their God-given talents to develop as healthy, ambitious, capable, life-long learners ready to live as valued members of our local community, Wales and the world.

We aim for all our pupils to leave our school as:
Empowered, Virtuous and Employable individuals,



Formulated by:	Mr D A Howells
Approved by:	Full Governing Body 12.11.25
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This policy replaces the Anti-Bullying policy and has been produced using the principles outlined in the November 2019 Welsh Government document Rights, respect, equality: Statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools.

Introduction Bullying remains a desperately worrying problem for many. Online spaces and social media continue to provide new tools and opportunities to bully others.

Bullying behaviour:

- is harmful for all the individuals involved
- becomes the focus of a learner's experience of daily life
- undermines safety, well-being and attainment
- damages school ethos
- is detrimental to the school and the wider community
- affects bystanders and those who know it is prevalent in their school.

It is acknowledged that bullying goes on in all schools in a variety of ways and to varying degrees. There is therefore a need for a coherent and co-ordinated whole school approach to try and prevent it from happening and to respond to it when it does.

Our school believes that its pupils have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied. It believes that each member of the school community has the right to learn and work in a safe, caring and supportive environment, providing the opportunity for individuals to achieve their best.

All forms of bullying are considered to be anti-social behaviour which are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. We believe that only when incidents of bullying are taken seriously and addressed will students be able to benefit from the opportunities available to them, and staff are able to fulfil their roles effectively.

As a Catholic school we recognise the importance and worth of each individual and the need to respect other people. This recognition is summed up for us in the teaching of Christ when he said:-

“Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my Disciples, if you love one another”. (John Ch. 13 V.34 & 35)

Objectives of this Policy:

- To emphasise the community's shared responsibility to help prevent students and staff becoming victims of bullying.
- To ensure that all members of the community know that bullying will not be tolerated.
- To ensure that governors, staff, students and parents understand what bullying is and its potential impact on individuals and the community.
- To ensure that all members of the community know the school's policy and feel confident to report incidents of bullying and / or suspected bullying when they occur.
- To manage incidents of bullying consistently, fairly, sensitively and promptly.
- To encourage the support of students, staff and parents so that when an incident of bullying occurs, appropriate action can be taken by the school to help both the target and the perpetrator.

What is bullying?

Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts others either physically or emotionally.

Bullying differs from an argument, a fight or friendship fallout in that it:

- is deliberate or intentional
- is generally repeated over time
- involves a perceived imbalance of power between perpetrator and target
- causes feelings of distress, fear, loneliness, humiliation and powerlessness

The distinctive elements of bullying behaviour

There are a number of distinctive elements associated with bullying. These include, but are not limited to:

- **intention to harm** – bullying is deliberate with the intention to cause harm. Those who bully others are often skilled at knowing exactly how to humiliate or hurt their target, picking on key aspects of their appearance, personality or identity that produces the effect wanted. They seek out the area in which they have power over their target.
- **harmful outcome** – someone or a group is hurt physically or emotionally. They can be isolated, humiliated or made fearful. Their sense of self-worth is reduced.
- **direct or indirect acts** – bullying can involve direct aggression such as hitting, as well as indirect acts such as spreading rumours, revealing private information about someone or sharing intimate images with people for whom the information/images were not intended.
- **repetition** – bullying usually involves repeated acts of negative behaviour or acts of aggression. An isolated aggressive act, such as a fight, is not usually considered bullying. Yet any incident can be the start of a pattern of bullying behaviour which develops subsequently. That is why incident records are so valuable
- **unequal power** – bullying involves the abuse of power by one person or a group who are (perceived as) more powerful, often due to their age, physical strength, popularity or psychological resilience.

How is bullying expressed?

Bullying can take many forms, including:

- **physical** – kicking, tripping someone up or shoving them, injuring someone, damaging their belongings or gestures of intimidation
- **verbal** – taunts and name-calling, insults, threats, humiliation or intimidation
- **emotional** – behaviour intended to isolate, hurt or humiliate someone
- **indirect** – sly or underhand actions carried out behind the target's back or rumourspreading
- **online** – using any form of technological means, mobile phones, social networks, gaming, chat rooms, forums or apps to bully via text, messaging, images or video
- **relational aggression** – bullying that tries to harm the target's relationships or social status: drawing their friends away, exploiting a person's special educational needs (SEN) or long-term illness, targeting their family's social status, isolating or humiliating someone or deliberately getting someone into trouble

- **sexual** – unwanted touching, threats, suggestions, comments and jokes or innuendo. This can also include sextortion, so called ‘revenge porn’ and any misuse of intimate, explicit images of the learner targeted
- **prejudice-related** – bullying of a learner or a group of learners because of prejudice. This could be linked to stereotypes or presumptions about identity. Prejudice-related bullying includes the protected characteristics Prejudice can and does also extend beyond the protected characteristics and can lead to bullying for a variety of other reasons such as social status and background. What is not bullying? Some behaviour, though unacceptable, is not considered bullying. These instances will be dealt with in accordance with the school Attitudes to Learning (ATL) policy to prevent an incident potentially escalating to become bullying.

The following examples are cases which would not normally be considered bullying:

- friendship fallouts – a friendship feud may however deteriorate into bullying behaviour that is enabled by the fact that former friends have an intimate knowledge of the fears and insecurities of one another. Children and young people who are targeted by former friends feel the betrayal deeply and are frequently isolated from their former friendship group.
 - a one-off fight – these will be addressed according to the school’s ATL policy unless it is part of a pattern of behaviour that indicates intentional targeting of another individual.
 - an argument or disagreement – between two children or young people is not generally regarded as bullying. Nevertheless, they may require assistance to learn to respect others’ views. Restorative approaches will be used to address such issues.
 - a one-off physical assault – the school will address these immediately under the ATL policy. Police involvement in cases where physical assault has happened may also be appropriate.
 - insults and banter – children and young people will often protest that an incident was a joke or banter. If two friends of equal power are in the habit of bantering with one another it is not deemed to be bullying. If one learner uses banter to humiliate or threaten another who is powerless to stop it and made fearful by the act, the border between banter and bullying is likely to be crossed.
 - a one-off instance of hate crime – unless this behaviour is repeated it would not usually be regarded as bullying. Such incidents will be dealt with in accordance with the school’s ATL policy. If considered necessary, the school would also need to involve the police.
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- they may exhibit perceived bullying behaviour due to their disability or condition, e.g. autistic learners may not be aware of other people’s personal space, or learners with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) may interrupt conversations or talk over other learners
 - they may experience lots of change, e.g. moving from a mainstream to a special school or pupil referral unit, or spending periods of time in hospital.

Prejudice related bullying:

There are many examples of prejudice-related behaviour. Some of these might include:

- stigmatising a learner with a disability or SEN
- using homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, sexist or racist language
- actively trying to remove any religious clothing such as a hijab, kippah, turban, cap or veil • using sexist comments, unwanted touching or the taking of images without permission
- commenting on someone's appearance such as their weight or hair colour.

Prejudice-related behaviour of any kind is unacceptable and could be considered as, or escalate into, incidents of hate crime. If the action is a one-off occurrence and is not repeated, the incident is not usually considered bullying; this does not mean the incident should not be addressed and will be using the school ATL policy.

Bullying involving learners with disabilities and/or SEN – defining disability and SEN Learners with a disability and/or SEN learners may be more vulnerable to bullying because:

- of negative attitudes towards disability or perceived disability
- of a lack of understanding of different disabilities and conditions
- they may not recognise they are being bullied
- they may be doing different work or have additional support at school
- they may be more isolated than others due to their disability or condition
- they may find it harder to make friends as a result of their disability or condition
- they may exhibit perceived bullying behaviour due to their disability or condition, e.g. autistic learners may not be aware of other people's personal space, or learners with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) may interrupt conversations or talk over other learners
- they may experience lots of change, e.g. moving from a mainstream to a special school or pupil referral unit, or spending periods of time in hospital.

Disabled and/or SEN learners may also find it more difficult to resist perpetrators because they have fewer friends to defend them and have difficulties telling someone if it occurs. They can be extremely adversely affected by bullying. In addition to being distressing, it can isolate them further and set back their social and educational development. Bullying of learners with disability and/or SEN can take the form of any of the traditional forms of bullying. However there are additional forms of bullying that SEN/disabled learners may experience:

Conditional friendship:

In these cases a group will allow a target to believe they are accepted into the friendship group. The group may however be using the target or place conditions on them in order to be part of the group. They might make the target the subject of their jokes, use them to run errands or even engage in criminal activity for them

Exploitative:

In these cases the bullying takes the form of deliberately subjecting a target to something they cannot tolerate. For example, if a target is especially sensitive to sounds or smell, exploitative bullying might be where the perpetrator repeatedly spreads food over their work or makes loud noises to startle them. The

eventual aim is to get the target child or young person into trouble because they will gradually become more stressed until they have an outburst of anger and/or retaliate.

Manipulative:

In these cases the perpetrator manipulates the target, who at first may not realise what is happening. They might believe the other child/young person or group of children/young people like them and they are friends. However, the perpetrator might manipulate the target into high-risk relationships where the bullying becomes very controlling.

Bullying linked to race, religion and culture:

This form of bullying describes a range of hurtful behaviour, both physical and psychological, that makes a person feel unwelcome, marginalised, excluded or powerless because of their colour, ethnicity, culture, faith (including lack of faith), national origin or national status.

A log of racist/other discriminatory behaviours is kept. Names of perpetrators of racial problems will be shared with the Police as appropriate.

Support and guidance will be provided for the targets and perpetrators of racist and homophobic bullying.

Online bullying

The school recognises that online bullying differs from other forms of bullying in that it can encourage many people to become involved in the bullying very quickly. It can also invade a person's personal and home space as well as their time in school because of the difficulty of controlling the circulation of electronic messages. Unlike face-to-face bullying, the target cannot walk away from online bullying. The potential long term consequences of online bullying are also understood, and the harm that may be caused to an individual's physical and/or mental well-being and, for students, their education. In fulfilling its duty of care to all members of the school's community all forms of online bullying will be taken seriously.

The school's policies and procedures will operate within a preventative framework designed to combat online bullying. However, any member of the school community found to be responsible for, or participating in online bullying by actively supporting online bullying activities, will be sanctioned within the remit of the school's Challenging Bullying Policy.

1. A range of opportunities will be used throughout the year to help promote the safe use of technology and its potential dangers e.g. through ICT and PSE lessons.
2. The Digital Competency Framework is cross-curricular and will be embedded into the Curriculum for Wales 2022.
3. The focus of the 'Citizenship' strand is on learners developing the skills and behaviours to contribute positively to the digital world around them, which includes protecting themselves online. The strand includes the elements of 'Identity, image and reputation', 'Health and well-being', 'Digital rights, licensing and ownership', and 'Online behaviour and cyberbullying' (online bullying). These skills will help learners to critically evaluate their place within the digital world, so that they are prepared to encounter the positive and negative aspects of being a digital citizen.

4. The 'Interacting and collaborating' strand also allows learners to explore both formal and informal methods of communication, including social media and instant messaging. Learners will not only look at how to store data, they will also consider the implications of data laws and how to share information appropriately. The fast changing digital environment offers boundless positive opportunities for children and young people. At the same time there are added risks and new forms of bullying and aggression. To stay up to date, as a school we will regularly check the Online Safety Zone (at hwb.gov.wales/zones/online-safety) within the Hwb digital learning platform.
5. Where it has been found that incidents have taken place off the premises, parents will be informed and advised to seek further advice from the police as appropriate.
6. The school will take a proactive approach to help ensure that students, staff, parents/carers and Governors;
 - can identify online bullying;
 - are aware of the school's 'acceptable use' policy;
 - appreciate the potential impact of online bullying on another person's safety and wellbeing;
 - support the school's practices to prevent online bullying and reduce the impact of any incidents that do occur;
 - take responsibility for reporting incidents of online bullying;
 - recognise that the school has powers, beyond the school site, to sanction a member of the school community if he/she is found to be responsible for, or actively supporting online bullying;
 - understand and support the sanctions that the school may impose against anyone found to be responsible for, or actively supporting online bullying.
 - All incidents of online bullying that occur during the school day and have been carried out on school premises will be investigated and logged.

Raising awareness of bullying

- Within the curriculum the school will raise the awareness of the nature of bullying and its impact through inclusion in PSE, RE, subject schemes of work (English, ICT, Drama and other curriculum subjects where appropriate) and via assembly themes.
- Governors, staff, students and parents/carers are made aware of the policy and have ready access to the policy via the school's website.
- High standards of behaviour and the need to care for and respect one another are promoted through the school's aims and in the expectations that we set in the classroom, around the school and in the local community.
- New staff and students admitted mid-year are made aware of the school's policies and procedures

Signs a child or young person might be experiencing bullying

Students who are being bullied may show changes in their behaviour, such as becoming shy or nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or seeking adult attention. There may be changes in work patterns

such as a lack of concentration or truancy from school. These are all reasons why we must have a zero tolerance approach to bullying.

Students, staff and parents/carers are asked to be alert to possible signs of bullying and to report it to the school if there is a concern.

Responding to incidents

The following steps should be taken when dealing with incidents. If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached.

Staff should refer the matter immediately to the Head of Department or a member of the Pastoral team who should:

- Seek to ensure the safety of the (apparent) target(s)
- Investigate the alleged incident;
- Listen to the account(s) of the alleged target(s)
- Ask for a written statement. This must be the person's own words but help may be given in the form of a scribe, if required. Statements must be signed and dated by the 'owner.'
- Listen to the account of the perpetrator.
- Ask for a written statement. This must be the person's own words but help may be given in the form of a scribe, if required. Statements must be signed and dated by the 'owner.'
- Organise written statements from reliable witnesses. These must be signed and dated by the 'authors.'
- Collate any other relevant evidence.
- In managing a bullying incident assistance should be requested so that students who have been involved are de-peered for the period of the investigation. This helps to ensure that the evidence gathered is accurate and represents a fair representation of each person's account.
- If a person has been physically hurt as part of the incident, medical assistance must be the first priority.
- The parent/carer must be informed by the Leader of Wellbeing or a member of the Pastoral Team. At this stage parents/carers should be told that; an incident has occurred, that an investigation will take place but that medical support is the school's first priority. In such circumstances, statements may need to wait until the injured person(s) is able to write an account of the incident. Witness statements should still be taken.
- Provide appropriate help and support for the target.
- Provide appropriate help and support for the perpetrator.
- Attempt reconciliation, if considered an appropriate way forward by the member of staff overseeing the investigation. Consent must be given willingly by the target and the perpetrator. A professional judgement will need to be made as to the timing of a reconciliation meeting as it is important that the students involved are confident to proceed.
- Inform parents/carers of both the target and the perpetrator.
- Ask that parents/carers come into school for a meeting.

- Liaise with the link member of the Senior Leadership Team / Deputy Headteacher to decide upon any sanctions to be imposed.
- Liaise with the Police or outside agencies, if considered appropriate, following discussion with the Senior Leader.
- Ensure information is passed on to appropriate staff.
- Record the incident on the school's central system – Provision Map. My Concern if safeguarding related.
- An Incident log of racist behaviour will be recorded as per procedure
- Incidents of bullying will be dealt with by the Head of Department or Leader of Wellbeing. The Senior Leadership Team / Deputy Headteacher must be informed of the incident and the actions that are being taken.
- In the event of an incident assessed to be very serious the Deputy Headteacher/Headteacher will oversee the investigation.

When incidents of bullying are reported to the Wellbeing Team they should determine which course of action to employ after first giving careful consideration to such factors as –

- i. The seriousness and / or repetitive nature of the offence(s)
- ii. The circumstances surrounding the incidents(s)
- iii. Knowledge of the pupils involved.

The following disciplinary steps, procedures and corrective measures are not exclusive or definitive, but should provide a selection from which the Pastoral Team can choose a single response, or a combination of responses, which appear most appropriate.

- official warnings to cease offending
- reflection time/detention
- internal exclusion/reflection
- exclusion from certain areas of the school premises or during times of the day e.g. lunchtimes
- interview with the Police
- fixed term exclusion
- permanent exclusion
- any other sanction in line with school policy

Please note: When online-bullying is suspected, the relevant item of technology will be confiscated and retained in the school safe until the matter has been resolved fully. When appropriate, the police might request the item as part of their investigations. If parents request to collect the item, this can be allowed but the parent will be asked to sign an agreement to say that the child will not bring the item into school until the matter has been resolved.

Support maybe provided to the target and/or perpetrator in the form of:

- reconciliation
- counselling

- involvement of external agencies e.g. Family Link Worker, Educational Psychologist, Youth Offending Team or Police Support and guidance will be provided for the targets and perpetrators of racist and homophobic bullying.

Support may take the form of one or more of the following:

- Pastoral mentoring within school
- CAMHs
- Counselling Service
- Youth Service
- Children’s Services Social Care including Child Protection
- Community Organisations and Voluntary Groups, including the Police

Actions to be taken when online bullying may have occurred:

Steps will be taken in accordance with the school’s Challenging Bullying Policy. The school may involve the Police and/or Children’s Services in the investigation if we believe that a member of the school community is responsible for bullying another member of the school via the school network. The school will work in collaboration with the Police if evidence indicates that a criminal offence has taken place.

One or more of the following disciplinary steps may be taken:

- Confiscation of technology
- Permission withdrawn to bring personal technology equipment into school;
- Official warnings to cease offending
- Reflection time
- Fixed term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion
- Any other sanction in line with the Schools’ Attitude to Learning Policy.

Support may be provided to the target and / perpetrator in the form of:

- Reconciliation
- Counselling
- Involvement of external agencies e.g. Educational Psychologist, Youth Offending Team or the Police
- Guidance in the safe use of Technology Support may be provided to the parent / carer in the form of:
- Meeting with the Pastoral Team to raise awareness of online bullying; what it is, safe use of the internet, protecting children from online bullying and the implications of online bullying.
- Meeting with a senior member of staff to identify the support needed by the parent/carers and / or student.
- Meeting with the school’s Police Liaison Officer
- Attendance at a parent workshop / forum.

Behaviour and conduct outside of school 6.25 Section 89(5A) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives headteachers a statutory power to regulate learners’ behaviour in these circumstances ‘to such extent as is reasonable’. Bullying may be an example of where headteachers used this power. Individual schools are best

placed to make judgements about what is reasonable in their particular circumstances. However, paragraph 6.26 suggests factors that a school could take into account in making such judgements.

While the school is able to regulate certain conduct off school premises, such as bullying behaviour, the school can only impose sanctions when the learner is on the school site or under the lawful control or charge of a member of staff. A sanction could be imposed while a learner is on a school trip, but not while the learner is on their journey home from school for instance. In such circumstances, the member of staff could indicate to the learner that they have been seen misbehaving and/or engaging in bullying behaviour and will receive a sanction; however, the member of staff must wait until the learner is next in school to apply the sanction.

Journey to and from school on the bus

The highest standards of behaviour are expected of all pupils travelling on school transport. In order to maintain good behaviour, the school has prefects and bus buddies on the majority of buses and on occasion, a seating plan may be put in place. There is a member of SLT who is responsible for linking with the local authority transport department and local transport companies. Close partnership working helps to ensure any issues are dealt with promptly. Pupils also undertake bus awareness training provided by the local authority.

The role of parents/carers

Parents and carers are expected, encouraged and supported to take responsibility for the behaviour of their children both inside and outside of school. The school will encourage parents/carers to work in partnership with the school to assist it in maintaining high expectations and standards of pupil behaviour and dealing with bullying.

Pupils are always expected to take responsibility for their own behaviour and are fully aware of the school's Attitudes to Learning Policy and procedures.

Pastoral staff and the Senior Leadership Team will ensure that procedures are consistently and fairly applied and will promote the idea that pupils take responsibility for their behaviour and that every member of the school has a responsibility for the common good of all the community at Archbishop McGrath High School.

If a parent/carer feels a matter has not been dealt with appropriately, a formal complaint can be submitted the using the school Complaints Policy.

Evaluation and review of the policy and strategy

The school will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. An earlier review will be undertaken if required in response to new legislation.

Anti-bullying Strategies

Advice to teachers – Preventative Measures

Good professional practices have been identified as the most efficient and successful preventative strategies which schools can employ to combat bullying. These include:–

1. Teachers being punctual and present for all lessons
2. The supervision by staff of corridors, at lesson and registration
3. Visibility & vigilance in carrying out supervision duties in all areas of the school. This is particularly important since bullying is most likely to occur in these places at break, lunch-time and before and after school. Duty teachers can play a vital role by identifying and patrolling danger spots where bullying may be taking place.
4. Lesson time spot checks

Advice to pupils who are bullied

1. Tell an adult you can trust – Parent, Form Tutor, Head of Learning, Head of Wellbeing and Pastoral Care TA, Supervisor, Bus Driver etc.
2. Tell your friends and ask for their support (but do not get involved in physical retaliation).
3. Do not give in to a bully's demands for money, clothing etc. Say "No" strongly and say you will report it if the bullying continues. Never try to buy off a bully.
4. Initially try to ignore minor bullying, but if it persists tell an adult.
5. Avoid being alone with a bully in places where bullying can occur.
6. Remember fighting back may make it worse, so tell an adult.
7. Write about the incident and pass this to an adult.

Advice to pupils who witness or know about incidents of bullying -

Do not condone bullying by doing nothing – be responsible, you have a duty to help stop it by reporting it to an adult and help.

Guidance for Parents/Carers

A) Advice to give your children

1. Advise your child always to tell an adult
2. Advise your child never to give in to a bully
3. Advise your child not to physically fight back

B) If parents suspect bullying

1. Reassure your child that there is nothing wrong with him/her.
2. Inform the school immediately. Speak to Pastoral or Senior Staff.
3. Keep a detailed written record, (e.g. time, date, names etc). If bullying persists use the record for supportive evidence.
4. Work with the school and your child to devise an 'Action Plan' against further bullying. Please contact the school if you feel that your child might be involved in or affected by any alleged incidents.
5. If the problem involves a pupil from another school, inform us and we will notify that school.

What parents/carers should look out for in their children

Be alert to the following signs of distress which could be indicative of bullying:-

1. Absenteeism – unwillingness to attend school, coupled with unconvincing excuses. Truancy.
2. Injuries – bruises, cuts etc. Causes are not obvious and explanations are unsatisfactory. Note also any damage to clothing and equipment which is suspicious.
3. Depression – moody, irritable, off food and/or other things normally enjoyed. In extreme cases threatening or attempting to run away or even suicide.
4. Money problems – requests for extra pocket money or money for lost dinner or bus tickets. Note also money missing from home.
5. Underachievement – school work / homework standard slowly, or suddenly, reduced.
6. Worries about the journey to and from school, on the school bus or walking. Taken individually these may not be due to bullying, but a combination of some of these could be significant and provide reason for further investigation.

Useful contacts and services

Bullying Bullies Out – Anti-bullying charity based in Wales that works with individuals, schools, colleges, youth and community settings.

E-mentors offer online support

(e-mail mentorsonline@bulliesout.com).

www.bulliesout.com e-mail: mail@bulliesout.com

Anti-Bullying Alliance – Information for schools, parents/carers and children and young people on all aspects of bullying. www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

Kidscape – Anti-bullying charity that runs workshops for children and young people who have been bullied. www.kidscape.org.uk

Childline

Telephone number: 0800 1111

www.childline.org.uk

Meic

Telephone number: 080880 23456

www.meiccymru.org

Heads Above The Waves – Support for children and young people suffering depression or self-harming. <http://hatw.co.uk/straight-up-advice>

Parents/carers Internet Matters – Advice on online issues for parents/carers and children and young people. www.internetmatters.org.uk