

Anti-Bullying Policy

Ellesmere Port Catholic High School



Approved by:	Mr J Coucill, Chair of Governors 
Lead of Review:	Mrs J Jones, Associate Deputy Headteacher
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Introduction

At EPOCHS we take our duty to provide a safe and harmonious environment for all young people both in school and when travelling to and from school very seriously. Bullying must not go unnoticed; it must be identified, challenged, and positive steps must be taken to support our policy of zero tolerance. Victims will be supported fully and perpetrators will be made to face the consequences of their actions.

Bullying is a deliberate act, done to cause distress. Any pushing, hitting, kicking, threatening, extortion, teasing or name calling, which happens often enough to make a student feel hurt, frightened, sad or lonely, is bullying.

We have always regarded bullying whether verbal, physical or cyber as a serious offence. We may not, however, always be aware of when bullying is happening and we would always ask parents to be especially alert and to share concerns with us immediately that there is any suspicion of bullying occurring. Any reported incident will always be investigated and dealt with firmly, involving the parents of offenders as a matter of course.

Definition

'Bullying is **regular** verbal or physical abuse that makes an individual feel uncomfortable or intimidated.'

Verbal bullying is any name calling, comments, teasing, swearing, remarks or threats targeted at an individual with the intent of upsetting them.

Physical bullying is any hits, pushing, punching, tripping, pinching or invasion of personal space with the intent of causing discomfort.

Cyber bullying is any name-calling, comments, teasing, remarks or threats targeted at an individual with the intent of upsetting them which are delivered through mobile phones or computers.

In tackling bullying we should accept that:

- Bullying is **repeated** behaviour not just individual incidences.
- Other pupils support the bully by their silence.
- There is no such excuse as 'just a joke'.
- It is easier to identify physical and cyber bullying although verbal bullying can be worse.
- In response we should support the victim, impose sanctions on the bully and seek to support the bully in abandoning bullying behaviour.

What does bullying look like, feel like, sound like?

Bullying is any behaviour by an individual or group that:

- Is meant to hurt – the person or people doing the bullying know what they are doing and mean to do it.
- Happens more than once – there will be a pattern of behaviour, not just a 'one-off' incident
- Involves an imbalance of power – the person being bullied will usually find it very hard to defend themselves.

It can be:

- Physical, e.g. kicking, hitting, taking and damaging belongings
- Verbal, e.g. name calling, taunting, threats, offensive/personal remarks
- Relational, e.g. spreading nasty stories, gossiping, excluding from social groups

- Cyber, e.g. e-mails, picture/video clip bullying, Instant Messaging (IM)
- Indirect, e.g. graffiti, defacing of property, display of pornographic, class, disability,
- Homophobic, racist or sexist material.

Who bullies?

Anyone has the capacity to bully. There are no completely reliable predisposition diagnoses. However, those who perceive themselves as low status within a community, institution or group may use bullying in an attempt to artificially boost their status. Self-esteem is therefore a key factor in whether someone bullies or not. This puts equal opportunities and inclusion at the centre of all anti-bullying work in schools.

Who is bullied?

Anyone can be bullied – young person, parent/carer/guardian, staff member or volunteer. People who suffer bullying are often perceived by others to be different. Sometimes the perceived difference is individual to that person – shyness, physical appearance, clothing and possessions, accent, perceived inappropriate behaviour.

Frequently the perceived difference comes from assigning an individual to a group. Such bullying would then be designated as class, disability, homophobic, racist, religious or sexist. People can be assigned or be a member of more than one group.

Signs of bullying:

- Poor performance
- Recurring illness
- Frequent absence
- Lowered self-esteem
- Lack of confidence.

Signs of the bully:

- Misuse of authority/power
- Domineering behaviour
- Inhibits discussion/exchange of views
- Always right
- Creates atmosphere of fear
- Overly critical of others
- Demears others to enhance own position
- Refuses to accept criticism.

Responding to reports about bullying

School

The school will take the following steps when dealing with concerns about bullying:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, it will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been made aware of it.

- A clear account of the concern will be recorded and given to a senior member of staff, Pastoral Leader or a member of the SLT.
- The investigating member of staff will interview everyone involved and keep a detailed record. This will be held in line with the school's data protection policy/practice.
- Form Tutors will be kept informed and if it persists, either the Form Tutor or Pastoral Leader will advise the appropriate subject staff.
- Parents and other relevant adults will be kept informed.
- Where bullying occurs outside school, any other relevant schools or agencies will be informed and advice/support obtained.
- Punitive measures will be used in line with our Staged Behaviour Management structure.
- School also uses the practice of Restorative Justice. Pastoral staff are trained to successfully re-integrated students and rebuild relationships.

Pupils who have been bullied will typically be supported by:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of staff of their choice.
- Providing reassurance that the bullying will be addressed
- Offering continuous support.
- Restoring self-esteem and confidence
- The use of specialist interventions and/or referrals to other agencies e.g. educational psychology, where appropriate.
- Help and advice on how to remove online material

Pupils who bully will be supported by:

- Discussing what happened
- Discovering why the pupil became involved
- Establishing the wrongdoing and need to change
- Informing parents to help change the attitude of the pupil
- The use of special interventions and/or referrals to other agencies where appropriate.

The following general disciplinary steps can be taken:

- Official warnings to cease offending
- Detention
- Exclusion from certain areas of the school premises
- Confiscation of mobile phones, in line with our Acceptable use (internet safety) policy
- Short term step-out to another school
- Minor fixed term exclusion
- Major fixed term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion
- Group or 1 to 1 Restorative Justice work to explain the negative effects of bullying to the perpetrators and their cohort.

Typical actions for students who choose to bully others -

First time –

Offender sent to their Pastoral Leader.

Support offered to the student who has been bullied

Both sets of parents informed.

With the victim's consent bring the offender and victim face to face so the offender can understand the effects of their action (RJ).

Appropriate sanction issued to offender e.g. 1 day in the Inclusion Room.

Record made on the students Electronic Pupil Record (EPR).

Victim to report to Head of Year/Pastoral Leader to ensure no bullying has continued, e.g. every day, then every week, once a month.

Second time –

Offender sent to Pastoral Leader.

Pastoral Leader to see parents.

Sanction set as a short step-out placement at another local school.

Offender is set targets and must complete formal work with the School Chaplain.

Record made on the student's record.

Support offered to the student who has been bullied.

Victim to report to Head of Year/Pastoral Leader to ensure no bullying has continued, e.g. every day, then every week, once a month.

Third time –

Offender to be seen by Deputy Headteacher i/c Behaviour and Attitudes with their parents.

Sanction set as a fixed term exclusion and possible Governor' Panel meeting with the understanding that failure to stop bullying could lead to Permanent Exclusion.

Offender to have free time monitored.

Record made on the students record.

Support offered to the student who has been bullied.

Victim to report to Pastoral Leader to ensure no bullying has continued, e.g. every day, then every week, once a month.

Parents

- Most concerns about bullying will be resolved through discussion between home and school. However, where a parent feels their concerns have not been resolved, they are encouraged to use the formal Complaints Procedure.
- Where a pupils is involved in bullying others outside school, i.e. in the street or through the use of internet at home, parents will be asked to work with the school in addressing their child's behaviour, for example, restricting/monitoring their use of the internet or mobile phone.
- Referral of the family to external support agencies will be made where appropriate.

Preventative measures

The school will:

- Raise awareness of the nature of bullying through inclusion in PSHE, registration time, assemblies, outside organization performances, subject areas and informal discussion, as appropriate, in an attempt to eradicate such behaviour.

- Give care and support to create and maintain a safe learning environment where all pupils feel safe, secure and valued and know they will be listened to and taken seriously in line with the school ethos.
- Participate in local and national initiatives such as Anti-bullying Week and the work of the LA's behaviour network.
- Seek to develop links with the wider community that will support inclusive, anti-bullying education.
- Raise awareness and promote activities and ideas through the School Council, Parent Working Party and the school website.
- The school will conduct regular anonymized pupil questionnaires on bullying throughout the school year and take appropriate actions as required.

Purpose

- To ensure that students, staff, parents and Governors understand the school's approach to bullying
- To promote a general awareness about bullying and to enforce the idea that it will not be tolerated
- To create a framework for students to speak out against bullying and not to be fearful of the consequences
- To reassure parents that bullying will be dealt with in a caring, firm and professional manner
- To provide students with the skills and strategies necessary to deal with bullies.

This policy reflects our active commitment to promote and safeguard the welfare of pupils at our school. We believe that children have a fundamental right to feel safe and protected. We aim to provide a secure, caring environment, highly skilled and aware staff and a curriculum which promotes self-esteem, nurtures well-being and empowers children to protect themselves.

Main ECM outcomes: Stay safe, enjoy school and achieve

Relationship to other policies

This policy is cross-referenced to the following policies: behaviour, child protection, ICT/E safety, complaints, health and safety, home-school agreement, recruitment and retention of staff, PSHCE, staff discipline and whistle blowing.

Policy Details

(refer to guidelines on dealing with bullying incidents and the EPCHS High School: Action Against Bullying Protocol)

- We encourage all adults in school, students and parents to have a collective responsibility in the prevention of bullying
- Whenever an incident of bullying is reported to or witnessed by a member of staff, the incident will be treated seriously and will be acted upon
- All information relating to an incident of bullying will be logged on Arbor and passed to the Pastoral Leaders. However, all staff should be prepared to support a student who seeks help regarding an incident of bullying
- All staff must report any bullying they witness or suspect to the Head of Year, via email, so that action can be taken
- Bullying will be discussed during Citizenship/PSHE activities and assemblies to help students understand bullying and its implications. Form Tutors will ensure that students are aware of the school's bullying policy and will make reference to it regularly. In addition, all staff should make clear to students the school's stance on bullying and the importance of respecting one another.

Roles and responsibilities of Head, other staff, governors

The **Headteacher** will be responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented and will:

- ensure the agreed definition of bullying (including cyber bullying) and sanctions will appear in the school prospectus and the staff handbook.
- ensure that anti-bullying procedures in the staff handbook are followed by pastoral staff and the school management team.
- establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to
- ensure that pastoral staff have had appropriate training to deal with this
- ensure that children are aware of what constitutes bullying and what they should do if they feel vulnerable
- ensure arrangements are in place for supporting victims of bullying
- ensure that the appropriate guidance and support is provided for those guilty of bullying behaviour
- have in place a policy and procedures for dealing with allegations of bullying against members of staff
- ensure that all staff and volunteers know how to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and address such concerns sensitively and effectively (whistle blowing policy)

The **staff** will:

- follow the procedures set out in the staff handbook when dealing with incidents of bullying (including cyber-bullying).
- liaise with the Headteacher to inform him of any ongoing issues or trends
- ensure accurate records are kept on the file of students involved and centrally and note action taken
- implement guidance and support for victims of bullying and those guilty of bullying behaviour

Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation

The Headteacher will arrange for the policy and procedures to be reviewed annually ahead of the prospectus and staff handbook being published.

Specific Guidance in Dealing with Bullying Incidents

EVERY CASE OF BULLYING IS DIFFERENT AND WE MUST RESPOND ACCORDING TO THE NEEDS OF EACH INDIVIDUAL CASE IN LINE WITH THE SCHOOL **ACTION AGAINST BULLYING PROTOCOL**

1. All staff, students and parents should be alert to signs of bullying. Staff should be watchful at all times, observing relationships both in and outside of the classroom.
2. If a student seeks help regarding an incident of bullying the member of staff should listen carefully, note details of the incident and identify any witnesses. The information should be passed on to the student's Head of Year for further investigation or monitoring.
3. If an act of bullying is witnessed by any member of staff it should be dealt with immediately, to enable a swift enquiry to take place. Incidents should be reported to the Head of Year or member of SLT
4. Any interviews to ascertain the facts about an incident of bullying should be conducted in a sensitive and professional manner.
 - Students involved most often are spoken to separately. Details of the interviews should be recorded
 - Students involved will be asked to write a written statement
 - Once the facts have been established a decision can be made regarding appropriate sanction and support.
5. Any student found to be bullying will be given a suitable sanction. E.g. SLT detention, time in the Inclusion Room. In cases of serious and persistent bullying exclusion will be used.
6. Students of both parents will usually be contacted. If a situation arises for the first time and is quickly and amicably resolved, parents would not usually be officially informed. However, the students involved would be encouraged to tell their parents what has happened and the action taken. In serious cases, or where a student has offended more than once, parents will be informed by telephone or a letter will be sent explaining the circumstances and often requesting an urgent meeting with the parents.
7. A student can be given help to develop strategies for dealing with bullying on their own. Support is also available for a student who is accused of bullying.
8. Following any incident, staff, students and parents should continue to monitor the situation. Any subsequent bullying must be reported immediately.

Any case of suspected bullying must be treated seriously and colleagues are asked to remind themselves of the procedures in our Bullying Policy.

Observing the body language of an aggressor can provide information but it is also very important that, faced with a possible confrontation, our own body language does not escalate a situation by prompting responses.

Some points to watch are:

- Do control your tone of voice: under stress it can rise in pitch
- Do avoid too much eye contact: this can become aggressive
- Do stay out of other peoples' body space: this body space grows with stress and invasion of it increases stress levels yet further
- Do avoid situations where you look down on people

- Do turn sideways: this is usually seen as unthreatening

The SHARP electronic reporting system



Students can also report bullying through the SHARP system that can be found on the school website. This is picked up by the Heads of Year and School Chaplain daily and then investigated in line with the school Action Against Bullying protocol.

EPCHS High School: Action Against Bullying Protocol

