Policy and Procedure

Anti-Bullying Policy

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Introduction

At Blessed Christopher Wharton Catholic Academy Trust, we consider bullying of any kind to be very serious behaviour and always take firm action against it. Bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals. It can be a barrier to their learning and have serious consequences for their mental health. Bullying which takes place at school does not only affect an individual during childhood but can have a lasting effect on their lives well into adulthood.

We are committed to developing and anti-bullying culture where bullying is not tolerated in any form. Therefore, by preventing and tackling bullying, we will help to create safe, disciplined environments where pupils are able to learn and fulfil their potential.

Legislation and Guidance

We have regard to, but not limited to, the following legislation and guidance and comply with the requirement that we must have measures in place to prevent all forms of bullying.

- The Education and Inspection Act (2006, 2011)
- The Equality Act 2010 (as amended 2018)
- The Children Act 1989
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations (2014)
- The Education Act (2011)
- Protection from Harassment Act (1997)
- The Malicious Communications Act (1988)
- Public Order Act (1986)
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (2017)
- Keeping children safe in education 2024
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment in Schools and Colleges Guidance (2018)
- Cyberbullying: Understand, Prevent and Respond: Guidance for Schools
- DFE: Approaches to Preventing and Tackling Bullying Guidance (2018)

All Trust schools' follow guidance as laid out in the above, which state we must have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. These measures are part of the school's Behaviour Policy and is communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents.

Definition of bullying

Bullying can be defined as *'behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally'*. (DfE "Preventing and Tackling Bullying", July 2017).

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyberbullying via text messages, sexual harassment and sexting, gender-based violence, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special

educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. Bullying is recognised by the school as being a form of child-on-child abuse.

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously our first priority although emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical.

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can in itself have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as banter or horseplay it can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviour. Early intervention can help to set clear expectations of the behaviour that is and isn't acceptable and help stop negative behaviours escalating.

Child on Child Abuse

All staff are aware that children can abuse other children (previously referred to as peer on peer). This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying)
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- sexting, sharing nudes or semi-nudes or youth produced sexual imagery ● initiation/hazing type violence and rituals

Serious violence and sexual harassment

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of **any** age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable.

All staff are aware of the importance of:

- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up.
- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”; and
- challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)

HSB is a term used to describe sexual actions that are outside what is safe for a young person’s stage of development. It includes actions that can harm either the child or young person themselves, or another person.

It can include:

- frequently and intentionally accessing age-inappropriate sexual material online
- using inappropriate language
- undertaking mutual sexual activity they are not ready for with peers
- sending and receiving illegal images
- sexual interactions where there are significant power differences, lack of consent, or through force or threats
- engaging in abusive or sexually violent sexual behaviour online or offline.

In such cases support such as one to one mentoring or counselling may also be necessary. Particular support from identified services may be necessary and Trust schools will seek advice through an Early Help referral to determine if the child may require additional support. We will also refer to the Traffic light tools for recognising worrying sexual behaviour in children and young people.

Consent

Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

Cyber-bullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

The Education Act 2011 amended the power in the Education Act 1996 to provide that when an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, has been seized by a member of staff who has been formally authorised by the headteacher, that staff member can examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone.

If an electronic device that is prohibited by the school rules has been seized and the member of staff has reasonable ground to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence, they must give the device to the police as soon as it is reasonably practicable. Material on the device that is suspected to be evidence relevant to an offence, or that is a pornographic image of a child or an extreme pornographic image, should not be deleted prior to giving the device to the police. If a staff member finds material that they do not suspect contains evidence in relation to an offence, they can decide whether it is appropriate to delete or retain the material as evidence of a breach of school discipline.

The Equality Act 2010

A key provision in The Equality Act 2010 is the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which came into force on 5 April 2011 and covers age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

All Trust schools adhere to our duties to comply with the PSED.

Abuse behaviour can happen to pupils in schools and settings, and it is necessary to consider what abuse is and looks like, how it can be managed and what appropriate support and intervention can be put in place to meet the needs of the individual and what preventative strategies may be put in place to minimise further risk of harm.

Staff should be clear and understand the individual school's policies and procedures. Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or seen as 'part of growing up'.

Roles and Responsibilities

The role of the Academy Council

The academy council supports the headteacher in all attempts to eliminate bullying from all Trust schools. This policy makes it very clear that the academy council does not allow bullying to take place in a school, and that any incidents of bullying that do occur are taken very seriously and dealt with timely and appropriately.

All Trust schools will record, and the academy councils will monitor incidents of bullying that occur and review the effectiveness of the procedures at least annually. The academy council require the headteacher to keep accurate records of all incidents of bullying and to report to the council on request about the effectiveness of school antibullying strategies. The academy council responds within ten school days to any request from a parent to investigate incidents of bullying. In all cases, the academy council notifies the headteacher and asks them to conduct an investigation into the case and to report back to a representative of the Academy Council and the Head then meets with the parents/carers to report the outcome of the investigation.

Headteacher meets with Parents/carers to share outcome of an investigation into bullying

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Academy Council minutes record the action that have taken place

The role of the headteacher

It is the responsibility of the headteacher to:

- Implement the school anti-bullying strategy and to ensure that all staff are aware of the school policy and know how to deal with incidents of child on child and adult incidents
- Identify a member of the senior leadership team to take overall responsibility, ensuring disciplinary measures are applied fairly, consistently and reasonably
- Keep accurate records of all incidents of bullying and to report to the academy council on request about the effectiveness of school antibullying strategies
- Ensure that all children know that bullying is wrong, and that it is unacceptable behaviour in school, drawing the attention of children to this fact when suitable
- Provide support. This may involve counselling and support for the victim of the bullying, and punishment for the child who has carried out the bullying

- Time will be spent talking to the child who has bullied explaining why the action of the child was wrong and endeavouring to help the child change their behaviour in future
- If a child is involved in bullying other children, the headteacher, the special needs coordinator and the pastoral worker may be fully informed. The child's parents will be invited into school to discuss the situation. In more extreme cases, for example where these initial discussions have proven ineffective, the headteacher may contact external support agencies such as the children's social care, behaviour support team and Catholic Care.
- Ensure that all staff receive sufficient training to be equipped to deal with all incidents of bullying
  ● Create a school ethos of mutual support and praise for success, so making bullying less likely.

The role of the school staff

Staff in all our schools take all forms of bullying seriously and intervene to prevent incidents from taking place. They will:

- Uphold and implement this policy accordingly
- Be alert to the impact any form of bullying can have and being especially alert to those who may be more vulnerable, this may include children with SEND
- If they witness an act of bullying, act immediately and do all they can to support the child who is being bullied, following procedures outlined in the school Behaviour Policy
- Escalate reports of bullying to the Headteacher
- Record using CPOMS which will automatically inform the DSL & Head
- Attend training to enable them to become equipped to deal with incidents of bullying and behaviour management
- Establish a climate of trust and respect for all. By praising, rewarding and celebrating the success of all children, we aim to prevent incidents of bullying.

Recording of Bullying Incidents on CPOMS

Staff will record:

- The nature of the incident – what, where, when, type of bullying.
- Name of those involved – those bullying, being bullied and bystanders.
- Action taken
- Racist language will also be recorded on CPOMS and reported to governors.

Staff will assess the seriousness of the incident – severity of impact, frequency, duration, intent, imbalance of power, empathy and remorse. Staff will also assess the need for curriculum-based intervention or intervention from the school's Nurture Team.

- Curriculum and Nurture support may include:
- Self esteem
- Resilience
- Assertiveness
- Anger Management
- Empathy
- Counselling

The Senior Leadership Team will regularly review CPOMs logs and actions taken.

The role of parents

Parents, who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact their child's class teacher immediately. It may be difficult to accept that your child is involved in bullying, but it is in your child's best interest to receive the help and guidance they may need. The co-operation of the parent is vital in resolving such incidences.

Parents have a responsibility to support their children and work in partnership with the school.

Supporting the school's Anti-bullying Policy and to actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the school.

Involvement of Parents and Carers

School will ensure that parents:

- Understand the school's anti-bullying policy
- Know who to contact at the school
- Believe that their concerns will be taken seriously
- Know what the school will do to follow up their concern
- Be asked for their advice
- Be part of the support, with regards to home-school strategies
- Recognise that resolving the problem may take time
- Be kept informed
- Feel that they can return to school if their concerns continue

Know how to make a complaint of they feel dissatisfied with the school's actions

Role	Member of Staff	Headteacher	Academy Council
Responsibility	Records incident on CPOMS	Reports incidents termly to Academy Council	Reviews effectiveness of procedures annually

A parent requests an investigation into bullying



Within 10 days the Academy Council responds to the request



notifies HeadteacherAcademy Council

who will conduct an investigation into the incident & report back to a member of the AC

Responding to bullying

Blessed Christopher Wharton Catholic Academy Trust has robust policies in place to deal with bullying and poor behaviour, when incidents do occur, they are taken seriously, the pupil reassured, and allegation dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached or witnessed the concern. Allegations of bullying should always be recorded on CPOMs so the DSL and Head are made aware.We believe pupils will learn best in a safe and calm environment that is free from disruption and in which education is the primary focus It is therefore our aim to create an environment that prevents bullying from being a serious problem in the first place.
A proactive approach is adapted where school staff gather intelligence about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict and develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place.

This includes talking to pupils about issues of difference, in lessons, through dedicated events or projects and assemblies. We can then determine what will work best for each particular issue.

Our schools have a strong ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat one another and the school staff with respect because they know that this is the right way to behave. This culture extends beyond the classroom to the corridors, the dining hall, the playground, and beyond the school gates including travel to and from school. Values of respect for staff and other pupils, an understanding of the value of education, and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others permeate the whole school environment and are reinforced by staff and older pupils who set a good example to the rest.

We also:

- Encourage parents to be involved to ensure that they are clear that the school does not tolerate bullying and are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being bullied

- Ensure pupils understand the school's approach and are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders
- Regularly evaluate and update their approach to take account of developments in technology, for instance updating 'acceptable use' policies for computers
- Implement disciplinary sanctions. The consequences of bullying reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see that bullying is unacceptable
- Openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related difference. As well as different family situations, such as looked after children/previously looked after children or those with caring responsibilities and any prejudice-based language is unacceptable
- Work with other agencies and the wider community to tackle bullying that is happening outside school
- Ensure pupils understand what bullying is and make it easy for them to report it so that they are assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted on, including those which may have occurred outside school including cyber-bullying
- Create a safe environment where pupils can openly discuss the cause of their bullying, without fear of further bullying or discrimination

Responding to cyberbullying

When responding to cyberbullying concerns, the school's Headteacher will: ●

Act as soon as an incident has been reported or identified

- Record on CPOMS
- Provide support to the victim of the bullying and work with the person who carried out the bullying, if a pupil, to ensure that it doesn't happen again
- Encourage the pupil being bullied to keep any evidence (screenshots) of the activity to assist the investigation
- Take all available steps where possible to identify the person responsible. This may include:
    - Looking at the use of school systems
    - Identifying and interviewing possible witnesses ○ Contacting the service provider and the police, if necessary
    - Work with the individuals and online service providers to prevent the incident from spreading and support in removing offensive or upsetting material from circulation. This may include the confiscation and searching of pupils electronic devices, in accordance with the DfE published guidance 'Searching, screening and confiscation at school and Childnet Cyberbullying guidance' ○ Requesting the deletion of locally held content and content posted online if they contravene school behavioural policies
- Ensure sanctions are applied and steps are taken to change the attitude and behaviour of the bully
- Provide access to any additional support that may be needed
- Inform the police if a criminal offence has been committed
- Provide information to staff and pupils on steps they can take to protect themselves online. This may include:
    - Advising those targeted not to retaliate or reply
    - Providing advice on blocking or removing people from contact lists

- Helping those involved to think carefully about what private information they may have in their public domain

Responding to sexual violence or sexual harassment

When responding to a report from a child all staff will reassure the child that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. Under no circumstances will a child be ever made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Staff will immediately report to the designated safeguarding lead who will follow the referral process as set out in Keeping children safe in education and sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools' guidance.

Intervention - Support for pupils who are bullied

Pupils who are bullied will be supported with appropriate provision for their needs. The nature and level of support will depend on the individual circumstances and the level of need. These can include a quiet word from a teacher that knows the pupil well, asking the pastoral team to provide support, providing formal counselling, engaging with parents, involving Catholic Care, referring to local authority children's services, completing a Multi-agency Referral Form (MARF), referring to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) or police, if a criminal offence has been committed. We will involve the pupil in any decision making, as appropriate.

The headteacher/DSL will:

- Interview all parties involved
- Ensure the provision of continuous pastoral support
- Speak with/inform school staff, where appropriate
- Ensure parents/carers are kept informed about the concern and action taken in writing via email/letter– as appropriate and in line with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Keep accurate records on CPOMS, including evidence, details regarding decisions, reasons for those decisions and action taken
- Work towards restoring self-esteem and confidence

Support for pupils who have perpetrated bullying

- Discuss what has happened, establishing the concern and the need to change
- Inform parents/carers to help change the attitude behaviour of the child
- Provide appropriate education and support regarding their behaviour or actions
- If online, request that content be removed and reporting accounts/content to service providers
- Implement sanctions, as identified in the schools Behaviour Policy
- Where bullying of or by pupils takes place off school site, including cyberbullying, will ensure the concern is fully investigated and if required collaborate with other schools or the police where necessary.

Vulnerable pupils

Bullying can happen to all children and it can affect their social, mental and emotional health. School staff will be alert to the effect any form of bullying can have and being especially alert to where it may have a severe impact.

We understand some pupils are more likely to be the target of bullying because of the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves. For example, those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), those who are adopted, those who are suffering from a health problem or those with caring responsibilities may be more likely to experience bullying because of difference. Children in care that are frequently on the move may also be vulnerable because they are always the newcomer.

These young people are often the same young people who might need greater support to deal with the impact of bullying, for example those who are going through a personal or family crisis. In addition, children with special educational needs or disabilities can often lack the social or communication skills to report such incidents so it is important that staff are alert to the potential bullying this group faces and that their mechanisms for reporting are accessible to all.

There will also be a range of other local or individual factors that result in some children being more vulnerable to bullying and its impact than others. Staff are aware of this and look to develop strategies to prevent bullying from happening.

Where bullying has a severe impact

In some circumstances the consequences of bullying may lead to a child or young person experiencing pronounced social, emotional or mental health difficulties. We will make appropriate provision for a child's short-term needs, including setting out what actions we have taken when bullying has had a serious impact on a child's ability to learn. If the bullying leads to persistent, long-lasting difficulties that cause the child to have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of those of the same age, we would consider whether the child will benefit from being assessed for SEND.

In July 2012 the cross Government No Health Without Mental Health: Implementation Framework was published. It describes the role that both schools and local authorities should play in supporting children's mental health and wellbeing.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice

While bullied children will not be routinely considered as requiring SEND support, we will provide support in a proportionate and tailored way to meet individual needs. The relevant statutory guidance, the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years, sets out how developing a graduated response to the varying levels of SEND among children is the best way to offer support.

Involvement of pupils

All Trust schools will:

- Involve pupils in policy writing and decision making to ensure they understand the school's approach
- Regularly ask for pupils' views on the extent and nature of bullying
- Ensure pupils know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying
- Ensure pupils are aware of the sanctions which may be applied against those engaged in bullying

Separate on site provision

Removing bullied children from school, even for a short time, disrupts their education and can make it difficult for them to reintegrate. In itself it also fails to address the causes of the problem and can send the wrong message that victims of bullying are unwelcome.

We will do all that we can to ensure bullied children continue to attend school. In addition to the examples of support listed above, this could include using separate on-site provision that provides respite for bullied pupils, whilst maintaining their educational progression. It is important that this support goes hand-in-hand with measures to tackle the bullying so that bullied children feel safe at school, and on their way to and from school.

Alternative provision

In extreme cases, where the effects of bullying are so severe that it is not possible to reintegrate a child back into, other arrangements must be made for the pupil to continue their education. In the first instance this may involve the transfer of the child to another mainstream school. Where a child has developed complex needs as a result of bullying, which cannot be met in mainstream education, then alternative provision may need to be arranged.

BCWCAT must make other arrangements for children of compulsory school age who, for any reason, would not otherwise receive suitable education. Suitable education is defined as efficient education suitable to a child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have. This education must be fulltime, unless this would not be in a child's best interests because of health needs. In these circumstances the education should be as close to fulltime as the child's needs allow and kept under review.

Separate statutory guidance on the use of alternative provision, issued in January 2013 sets out that parents, pupils and other professionals should be involved in decisions about the use of alternative provision. It also states that there should be clear objectives and arrangements for monitoring progress.

Alternative provision should have a rigorous focus on supporting children to continue their education whilst meeting their individual needs, including social, emotional and health needs. In the majority of cases the aim of alternative provision should be to support reintegration back into mainstream education, working closely with pupils and their parents to agree a plan and timetable for return.

Intervention - Discipline and tackling underlying issues of bullying

Disciplinary measures will be taken against pupils who bully in order to show clearly that their behaviour is wrong. Disciplinary measures will be applied fairly, consistently, and reasonably taking account of any special educational needs or disabilities that the pupils may have and taking into account the needs of vulnerable pupils. It is also important to consider the motivations behind bullying behaviour and whether it reveals any concerns for the safety of the perpetrator. Where this is the case the child engaging in bullying may need support themselves.

Support for staff who are bullied

We will take measures to prevent and tackle bullying among pupils. But it is equally important that we make it clear that bullying of staff, whether by pupils, parents or colleagues, is unacceptable. We will

follow the separate advice note which provides advice for headteachers and all school staff on how to protect themselves from cyberbullying and how to tackle it if it happens.

We will deal promptly with grievances regarding the school response to bullying in line with our Complaints Policy.

Monitoring and review

All incidents of bullying will be logged and the headteacher informed. These incidents are reported termly to academy council in the headteacher report.

This policy will be reviewed and monitored on a regular basis but at least annually.

DOCUMENT CONTROL	
Policy Document	Anti Bullying Policy
Lead Member of Staff:	Safeguarding Lead
Authorised by:	BCWCAT Trust Board
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