

ST SWITHUN'S SCHOOL

SAFE TO LEARN : PREVENTION OF BULLYING

The School aims to be a caring, supportive community based upon respect, good manners and concern for others. It is committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so that pupils can develop their full potential. It is made up of pupils and adults from a variety of cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds, and relies on mutual tolerance, courtesy and co-operation in order that learning can take place in an orderly atmosphere.

Some pupils require additional support and help. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting St Swithun's School in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together. Acceptance of this policy forms part of our standard terms and conditions.

Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. The School aims to treat staff, pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and expects everyone to do likewise. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable. Where necessary, sanctions (which are described in the Behaviour Policy) will be applied for behaviour that constitutes bullying or harassment of any kind.

Definition of bullying

Bullying may be defined as the intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another person. It may take the form of racial, cultural, religious, homophobic, sexual, sexist, disability or cyber related bullying. It may involve

- physical (including sexual) intimidation
- verbal intimidation
- cyber intimidation (including chat room, email, e-photos and SMS messages)
- emotional means (by excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours)
- manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone
- being party to bullying though not actively involved

Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidatory.

Bullying may involve actions or comments that are racist, homophobic, which focus on disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape). Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time. It can cause serious and lasting psychological damage and even suicide. Harassment and threatening behaviour are criminal offences.

The School always treats it very seriously. It conflicts sharply with the policy on equal opportunities, as well as the School's overall aims and ethos.

Note: this policy conforms to the Education Regulations (2003) required by the DCSF and implemented by the ISI. It draws on: *Safeguarding Children In Education* (Sept 04); *Guidance for Safe Working Practice for the Protection of Children and Staff in Educational Settings* (Feb 05) and *Safe To Learn* (Sept 07), which can be found in the Staff Room cupboard, or down loaded from the DCSF website. *The Safe To Learn* document challenges schools to move beyond the 'what to do if?' approach to the problem of bullying, and to reflect on the need to create a school culture which does everything in its power to prevent the possibility of bullying or intimidating behaviour occurring.

Signs of bullying

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

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

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

Preventing bullying

The School uses the following to signal zero tolerance of bullying:

- Assemblies to explain the school policy on bullying, and encourage reflection.
- the PSHE programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities. It enforces the message about the importance of taking care of each other
- Form time and House meetings are used to tell pupils whom they should inform if they are being bullied, or are worried that another pupil is being bullied.
- other lessons, particularly RS, English and Drama highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce the message that bullying is unacceptable. (See appendix for curriculum coverage)

- all pupils are encouraged to tell a member of the teaching or pastoral staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place. Every member of staff is briefed on how to respond to such allegations as part of their induction training.
- all reported incidents are recorded and investigated. Reported incidents are always monitored
- the strong and experienced pastoral team of House staff and Form teachers who support the Deputy Head are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority, and are alert to possible signs of bullying.
- the PSHE team, the Deputy Head and Senior Housemistress team give support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both victims and bullies.
- the Sanatorium sisters are an important part of our pastoral support, and in consultation with the Headmistress will refer individuals about whom they have social, emotional or behavioural concerns for professional confidential advice and counselling support.
- the School Chaplain will give support to any member of the community, especially at a time of family break-up, sickness or bereavement. The Chaplain actively encourages the development of tolerance, understanding and respect for others in a multi-faith community.
- staff are on duty at lunch times and after school when pupils are not in class and are alert to areas where bullying might occur. Inappropriate language or behaviour is always challenged.
- in boarding houses, teams of tutors support the House staff who act *in loco parentis*. The informal house environment is important in reinforcing a pupil's standards and values, providing the opportunity for friendly, informal discussion of matters of concern to the individual pupil outside the formal classroom. Close contact between the House staff and parents/guardians is maintained, especially if there are worries about a pupil's well-being.
- advice on where pupils can seek help, including details of confidential help lines and web sites for to external specialists, is posted in public rooms throughout the school
- all pupils have access to a telephone helpline, enabling private calls for support
- cluster groups in Houses enable trained older pupils to offer advice and support to younger pupils, if necessary.
- all senior pupils are briefed specifically on the importance of offering support and assistance to younger and to vulnerable pupils.
- initiation ceremonies designed to cause pain anxiety or humiliation are forbidden.
- incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips and that occur in the vicinity of the school, involving our pupils are investigated appropriately
- feedback from parents/guardians on effectiveness of our preventative measures is welcomed

Procedures for dealing with and recording reports of bullying

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

- the person to whom it was reported or who first discovers the situation, will reassure and support the pupils involved.
- he/she will inform an appropriate member of the pastoral team as soon as possible.
- the member of staff will explain the disciplinary measures that are potentially involved.
- the victim will be spoken to on his/her own and asked to write an account of events.
- the alleged bully, together with all others who were involved, will be spoken to individually and asked to write an account of events.
- the incident will be recorded by the person handling the process (perhaps the Housemistress or master, the Form teacher, or the Deputy Headmistress, depending on its nature)
- relevant House staff and Form Teachers will be informed. In very serious incidents, the Headmistress will be informed.
- the victim will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the alleged perpetrator. It will be made clear to him/her why revenge is inappropriate. He/she will be offered support to develop a strategy to help him or herself.
- the alleged bully will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the victim, and it will be made clear why his/her behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. He/she will be offered guidance on modifying his or her behaviour, together with any appropriate disciplinary sanctions, and a contract of behaviour agreed.
- the parents/guardians of all parties should be informed and invited into school to discuss the matter. Their support should be sought.
- a way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and counselling, should be agreed and recorded. This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for children who are being bullied and for pupils who bully others, as well as dealing with appropriate disciplinary measures.
- a meeting involving all the parties, with close staff supervision, could be helpful in developing a strategy for all concerned to close the episode.
- a monitoring and review strategy will be put in place, with appropriate timings agreed.
- in very serious and persistent cases, and only after the Headmistress has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to the Social Services. However, it is the policy of St Swithun's School to attempt to resolve such issues internally under the school's own disciplinary procedures, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely.

Definition of cyber-bullying:

Cyber-bullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others."

Bill Belsey

Cyber-bullying can involve Social Networking Sites, like Bebo and Myspace, emails and mobile phones, used for SMS messages and as cameras.

Prevention of cyber-bullying

In addition to the preventative measures described above, St Swithun's School:

- expects all pupils to adhere to its IT user agreement /code of conduct for the safe use of the internet. Some sites are blocked by the filtering system and IT staff monitors pupils' use.
- may impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet.
- issues all pupils with their own personal school email address. Access to sites such as "hotmail" is not allowed.
- offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyber-bullying in IT lessons, which covers blocking and removing contacts from "buddy lists.
- offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe.
- the use of mobile phones is not permitted in classrooms, public areas of the school, or where they may cause annoyance to others.
- the use of cameras on mobile phones is not allowed in washing and changing areas, or in the bedrooms of boarding houses, with or without the knowledge and agreement of the subject.

Further details, on pupils' use of ICT, mobile phones and other electronic devices are given in the IT user agreement and in Boarding House rules.

Other relevant school policies and guidelines:

1. In order to satisfy regulatory requirements, this prevention of bullying policy has become too long and complex to be easily accessible to younger pupils. Please note there is a simplified version which concentrates on practical measures: **Prevention of Bullying: Pupils' Version**
2. **Concerns, Problems and Complaints** (which follows this page)
3. **The Curriculum** in relation to prevention of bullying (appendix to this policy)
4. **Behaviour, Discipline, Sanctions and Rewards policy**
5. **Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children (Child Protection) policy**
6. **Professional Guidelines: Safe to Learn: Embedding Prevention of Bullying Work in School**
7. **Supervision of Pupils policy**
8. **Missing Girls' policy**

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January...2010

TO BE DISPLAYED IN EACH ROOM

CONCERNS PROBLEMS AND COMPLAINTS

We all have problems and difficulties from time to time and it is important that we learn to address them and find means of solving them.

The difficulties can range from concerns about essentially minor matters to serious problems about work or relationships with staff or fellow-pupils. A situation may arise when there is cause for serious complaint about unfair treatment, infringement of the rights of the individual or even abuse.

1. Minor concerns should be talked through with your Form teacher, HoM or the relevant member of staff. If it is a general issue, not merely a personal one, it can be discussed in the School Forum.
2. You should always try to talk to someone about any problem which is making you unhappy.

Your friends or an older girl may be able to help, but sometimes you will need the help of an adult. In school your HoM, her Deputy, your form teacher, the Headmistress, Deputy Headmistress or any member of staff to whom you feel you can talk comfortably will always listen to you. Concerns or problems revealed in this way will not be openly discussed in the Staff Room.

It may be more appropriate to talk to your parents, Sister in the Sanatorium, or the Chaplain. If you wish to talk to someone quite independent of school you could contact:

	Tina Reid	Tel: 01962 862224
or	Child Line:	Tel: 0800 1111
or	NSPCC helpline	Tel: 0808 800 5000
or	Ofsted	Tel. 08456 404040
or	Children's Rights Director	www.rights4me.org

The School can also put you in touch with a professional counsellor.

3. If something is causing you such serious worry that you wish to make a formal complaint, you should set out in writing the grounds for your complaint, sign it and give it to the Headmistress, Deputy Headmistress or Senior Housemistress. Once the complaint has been formally made, the member of staff with whom it has been lodged will:
 - (a) investigate fully the factual basis of the complaint;
 - (b) interview other individuals involved to get an overall view of the perceptions and points of view which may be influencing the matter;
 - (c) have a second meeting with the complainant to discuss the results of (a) and (b).

This meeting will be as soon as is reasonably possible and a record of the discussion agreed by both parties. You may bring a friend or other independent person with you to either or both of the meetings.

If the complaint is of a serious nature it may be necessary to ask an independent person to investigate it. This may be done at the request of the complainant or senior staff member.

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January 2010

ST SWITHUN'S SCHOOL

PREVENTION OF BULLYING: PUPILS' VERSION

Definition of Bullying: the intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another person.

It may be

- racial
- cultural
- religious,
- homophobic
- sexual
- sexist
- disability
- cyber related

At St. Swithun's School physical bullying is rare. Bullying behaviour is more likely to be

- verbal unkindness or rudeness
- offensive gestures
- graffiti and notes (parents/family, clothes, home, appearance, attitude to school and work)
- moving/damaging personal property
- aggressive behaviour to get own way
- emotional means (by excluding, tormenting or spreading nasty rumours)
- manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone
- being party to bullying though not actively involved
- cyber intimidation (including chat room, email, e-photos and SMS messages)

Bullying behaviour:

- can happen anywhere and at any time
- is deliberate
- is often hidden and subtle, but it can be open and aggressive
- is rarely initially spotted by teachers, but the girls may know about it
- can reflect attitudes learnt at home (e.g. racism, snobbery and „standing up for oneself“)
- is not confined to children, nor is it practised only on children
- It can cause serious and lasting psychological damage and even suicide.

Bullying is anti-social behaviour and is totally unacceptable. It is chosen behaviour and can therefore be changed. The School will not tolerate it and if necessary, parents will be involved and serious sanctions will be imposed. Harassment and threatening behaviour are criminal offences.

ANY REPORT OF BULLYING MUST BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY

AND MUST BE REPORTED

**Pupils should see CONCERNS PROBLEMS AND COMPLAINTS
for guidance on what to do**

Prevention:

1. By frequently re-stating the School's anti-bullying stance :
 - in Morning Assembly;
 - by setting an example in our own behaviour in all our dealings with each other
2. Watching for:
 - potential victims (anxious, sensitive, quiet, lonely, distinctive in some way, often intelligent and academic)
 - potential bullies (demanding, assertive, insensitive to others, inadequate in some way, not succeeding academically; insecure about their own standing or popularity)
3. Watching for changes in behaviour that may indicate that someone is being bullied:
 - new pattern of arriving late
 - solitariness
 - work deteriorating
 - unhappy, anxious or withdrawn behaviour in a previously happy person
4. Establishing comfortable relationships within form/house and encouraging senior girls to gain the confidence of younger ones, and to look out for them.
5. Identifying danger areas - corridors, cloakrooms and around the school, especially before, between and after lessons. Staff should be prompt to House duties, form time and lessons to reduce these opportunities
6. Making it clear at all times that insensitive and demanding behaviour is not acceptable, and not allowing such behaviour to produce beneficial results.
7. Building on an innate sense of fairness.
8. With junior forms, staff should foster inclusiveness by pairing girls for work on a rotational basis where possible.
9. Acting promptly when bullying is brought to our attention.
10. It must be clear that action is being taken; feeding back to the person reporting the bullying.

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Action concerning bullying by girls

1. It is rare for a member of staff to witness bullying by girls, but if so, s/he should :

- Remove the bully from the scene and take her to the HoM
- Take the victim somewhere quiet and discreet
- Make the Headmistress/Deputy Head aware of the incident

2. Usually it is a girl or a parent who will tell the Form Teacher or HoM that a girl is being bullied. It is very important that this happens because the victim herself may be very reluctant to tell an adult; she may feel that it is her fault; that she is inadequate, and she may fear reprisals.

- any incident must be reported to the Headmistress/Deputy Headmistress

3. The next stage is for the Headmistress/Deputy Headmistress to have discussions with the appropriate people and to agree who is to carry out the investigation. **One person must be in overall charge.**

Discussions with victim and bully

The first step is to talk to the victim.

- Assure the girl that it is not her fault; that she is doing the right thing by talking about it.
- LISTEN
- Ask open, not leading questions eg „in your own words, can you tell me what happened ?’
- Do not give guarantees of confidentiality. Anti-social behaviour will have to be tackled. You can promise that it will be tackled and that she will be told what is to happen.
- Ask the girl to write down examples of bullying behaviour. It is important to have a record in her own words if at all possible
- Agree a plan of action.
- Keep a record of all discussions and conversations. This should include a description in the girl’s own language of any past episodes of bullying.

Discussions with the alleged bully should also be recorded. She needs help to understand and acknowledge that her behaviour has hurt the victim and she should be helped to an understanding of the victim’s views and feelings. It must be made clear that any behaviour which has an adverse affect on another person will not be tolerated, and must stop. It should also be made clear to her what actions will be taken and what support systems are available to her to enable her to change her behaviour.

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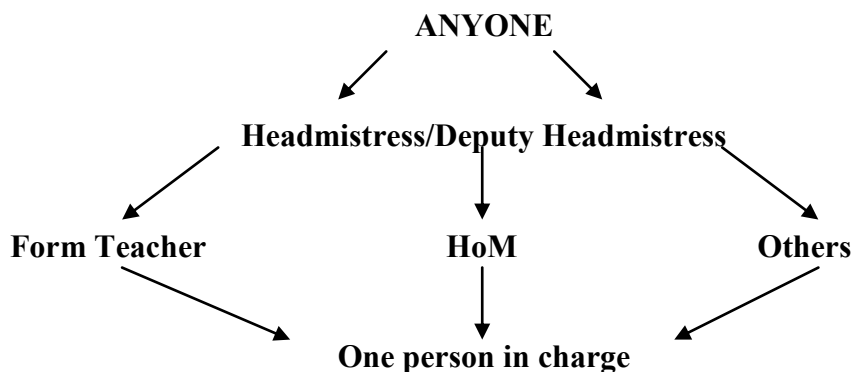
**Pupils should see CONCERNS PROBLEMS AND COMPLAINTS
for guidance on what to do**

Tackling the bullying behaviour

Action must be co-ordinated by the person in overall charge of the investigation and planned with the HoM and Form Teacher; the Headmistress and the Deputy Headmistress must be kept informed. More information and detailed strategies are available from the Deputy Headmistress and also on S\NOTICEBOARD\PSHE.

Note: the decision about when to inform or involve parents of the victim and the bully remains with the Headmistress, or in her absence, the Deputy Headmistress.

Lines of communication:



Follow-up:

Continue to monitor the situation for a considerable period of time. Ensure that all staff working with those involved are briefed appropriately. The weekly Staff Meeting is the usual forum for this.

There is no single method for dealing with bullying. Possible strategies include:

- Group discussions : a hypothetical problem
how to solve it
understanding the victim's feelings
- Individual approach: tackle the ring leader first (,'I hear nasty things are happening to...')
confront them with the unhappiness of the victim.

The objective is to stop the anti-social behaviour without adverse effect on the victim. The bully must also be given help in making amends and integrating back into school life.

Personal, social, citizenship and health education is carefully integrated into the overall curriculum. Please consult the PSHE coordinator for detailed information, and refer to the part of this document called The Curriculum, which follows.

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January 2010

All subjects have schemes of work which encourage team work, build self-confidence and self discipline, teach tolerance of other points of view and respect and care for the rights and possessions of others. The subject matter in many subjects provides scope for addressing bullying related issues:

ART

The curriculum allows every girl to express themselves on an individual level and may provide the opportunity to tackle issues directly affecting themselves and their friends. The scope for self reflection and self appraisal is invaluable.

BIOLOGY

The L4 topic on human reproduction and development includes emotional changes at puberty and variation between individuals.

CHEMISTRY

Practical lessons provide scope for simulating real-life situations, e.g. in Research Lab, Industry, and the issues surrounding working cooperatively.

CLASSICS

Lessons are used to encourage team work, build self-confidence and self-discipline, teach tolerance of others and their points of view, and care of possessions, wherever possible. For example:

U4 includes the topics of slavery and of marital relationships in Rome;

L5 explores racial tension and variety of religious beliefs in Alexandria and women's rights

In M5-U6 discussions based on artistic, historical or literary media from the ancient world,

Interpersonal relationships questioning power imbalances are regularly highlighted and explored. Questioning the ancient world allows students to understand and explore their own, in terms of bullying by an individual or by the state.

DRAMA

In L4 and U4 (and M5 options), role-play can cover many of the themes of friendship, peer group pressure which touch closely on anti-social behaviour, and provide a context to reflect and work through these issues.

ENGLISH

Particularly important in enabling girls to appreciate the feelings of others and to empathise through literature a range of emotions and experiences beyond their own lives; for example:

L4: the study of *Skellig* is a basis for understanding “outsiders” and unconventional choices;
U4: *A Christmas Carol* and *The Merchant of Venice* deal with the abuse of power and the effects of isolating the individual;

L5: *I'm the King of the Castle* deals specifically with peer bullying, and the website of Susan Hill, explores real-life cases; GCSE work includes a study of manipulation by the media.

Group work in all years is monitored to ensure that interpersonal dynamics operate sympathetically; research work, presentations and choric speech offer opportunities for the girls to explore roles of leadership, delegation and facilitating the work of others; peer assessment provides scope for girls to appreciate the need for kindness and tact in commenting on each others' work.

FOOD AND TEXTILES

Practical lessons offer possibilities for talking over many things. Staff can hear and take action, or follow up afterwards with the individuals and their Form and House staff

GEOGRAPHY

Explores community, race, religion, wealth, and poverty; the role of women in traditional societies.

HISTORY and POLITICS

Covers the topics of liberty, democracy, rights before the law, as opposed to tyranny, cruelty and injustices, attitudes to authority; protection of the weak; the rule of law; cultural politics and multi-culturalism.

MODERN LANGUAGES

The Modern Languages department exists to promote cultural awareness, understanding, tolerance and communication. Our course encourages an awareness of people from European countries and the wider international community. Our methodology makes use of pair work, which demands role play, acceptance of the limitations of others and non-threatening peer co-operation.

Specific topics include discussions of bullying in L5 German, and various aspects of peer pressure (drugs/alcohol/smoking/weight/dress etc) which feature in the GCSE and AS syllabuses. The M5 exchange is a practical example of learning to accept cultural differences. The U6 specification includes topics such as immigration and racism, ethnic minorities, colonialism, women's rights and discrimination (including designer babies and abortion).

PSHE

There is a scheme of work for L4 which explores the issues which arise frequently in the first year in the school. The school delivers a very comprehensive PSHE programme for girls in U4 to U5. Specialist speakers are invited to the school and work is followed up by both form and house staff.

PE

Much of the practical work involves partner, group or team work and dance and gymnastics are used to ensure girls work with different people and to ensure everyone whatever their ability is valued by pupils and staff alike. PE lessons continue to offer opportunities to observe group behaviour and relationship changes both in lessons and more often when working with teams or travelling to matches. These observations also include times before and after lessons when problems might occur. Teachers have opportunity to see or hear, and take action, or to choose not to react immediately but to follow up either with the girl or the teachers responsible for her.

PHYSICS

practical work encourages team building, cooperation, tolerance and mutual respect

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Positive value is placed on all religious and cultural traditions and expressions. Work in the U4 focuses on Human Rights and responsibilities and issues surrounding Racism. In the L5 the topic Religion and Persecution reflects on the consequences of intolerance and prejudice

TECHNOLOGY

The initial project with L4 involves girls working in pairs encouraging girls to meet, mix and work in new partnerships. The nature of the practical work throughout the years allows interaction and variation of relationships and working groups.