

Anti-Bullying and Cyber-Bullying Policy



MOUNT
BARLBOROUGH HALL
EDUCATING MEN AND WOMEN FOR OTHERS SINCE 1842

ISI Regulatory Code – A8

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Anti-Bullying and Cyber-Bullying Policy

This policy defines bullying, outlines the signs of bullying and how we as a community respond to bullying.

This policy applies to Mount St Mary's College.

Mount St Mary's College aims to encourage pupils to adopt the highest standards of behaviour, principles and moral standards and to respect the ethos of the schools. Promoting the emotional well-being of all of our pupils is key to their development. We aim to teach trust and mutual respect for everyone. We believe that good relations, good manners and a secure learning environment play a crucial part in the development of intellectually curious pupils who are motivated to become life-long learners.

We welcome pupils from a wide variety of ethnic and social backgrounds and faiths. We treat everyone as an individual and aim to develop the whole person equipped to take their place in the modern world.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the documents of:

- Behaviour Management Ladder
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Discipline and Exclusion Policy
- Rewards and Sanctions Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Use of Reasonable Force Policy

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Our community is based upon three golden rules:

1. We conduct ourselves with **respect**; respect for ourselves, respect for others and respect for our environment.
2. We hold dear the Ignatian principles of **compassion** and **care**: we always seek to understand the difficulties others may be facing. We are sensitive to the needs of others and we try to help in an) way you can.
3. We strive for the **Magis**: in all things, at all times, we have high standards in all that we do and we push ourselves to be the very best that we can be – for the Greater Glory of God (**AMDG**).

We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so that everyone can develop their full potential. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed, but orderly, atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other.

Parents have an important role in supporting the 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. This policy is available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils on our website and on

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request. It is also available and known to staff and boarders, including junior and recently appointed staff.

Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination **will not be tolerated**. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the school. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable. It may occur directly or through cyber-technology such as social websites, text messages, photographs and emails.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

"Bullying may be defined as: *Behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups*". Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for School Leaders, Staff and Governing Bodies.

Bullying is the intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another person by physical (including sexual), verbal (including email, chat room and SMS messages), and emotional means (by excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidatory.

Bullying may involve actions or comments that are racist, sexual, sexist or homophobic, which focus on religion, cultural background, disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape), special educational needs and disabilities, or because a child is adopted or is a carer. Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time and can involve everyone - pupils, other young people, staff and parents. The use or threat of corporal punishment is forbidden.

Where a bullying incident leads to concerns of serious harm against a pupil then it will be treated as a child protection matter.

CYBERBULLYING – DEFINITION

"Cyberbullying 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."

Cyberbullying can involve Social Networking Sites, like Facebook and Instagram, emails and mobile phones used for SMS messages and as cameras.

However it differs from other forms of bullying in several significant ways:

- by facilitating a far more extreme invasion of personal space. Cyberbullying can take place at any time and intrude into spaces that have previously been regarded as safe and personal.
- the potential for anonymity on the part of the bully. This can be extremely distressing for the victim

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- the potential for the bully to play very rapidly to a larger audience so the scale and scope of cyberbullying can be greater than for other forms of bullying.
- through the knowledge that the data is in the world-wide domain, disproportionately amplifying the negative effect on the victim, even though the bully may feel his / her actual actions had been no worse than conventional forms of bullying
- the difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages as more people get drawn in as accessories. By passing on a humiliating picture or message a bystander becomes an accessory to the bullying.
- the profile of the bully and target can be different to other forms of bullying as cyberbullying can take place between peers and across generations. Teachers can be victims and age and size are not important.
- many cyberbullying incidents can themselves act as evidence so it is important the victim saves the information.

Mr Matthew Powell, (Deputy Safeguarding Lead), is a CEOP ambassador. He offers an annual training session to all parents on cyber-safety and awareness.

OUR RESPONSE TO BULLYING

We always treat bullying, including allegations of bullying, very seriously. It conflicts sharply with the school's policy on equal opportunities, as well as with its social and moral principles.

Bullying can be so serious that it causes psychological damage, eating disorders, self-harm and even suicide, and, whilst bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.

SIGNS OF BULLYING

Changes in behaviour that may indicate 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
- Frequent visits to the Medical Centre with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches etc
- 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, experiencing nightmares etc
- 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.

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All staff are aware that many factors may make students more vulnerable to bullying these include but are not exclusive to:

- Differences in age
- Special Educational Needs
- Mental Health issues
- Disability
- Gender Identity
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender
- Race
- Religion

We are mindful of the school's responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 to ensure those with protected characteristics are not targets for bullying.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

We take the following preventative measures in place in order to ensure that bullying does not become a problem which is associated with this school:

- All new pupils (including boarders and our youngest pupils) are briefed thoroughly on the school's expected standards of behaviour. They are told what to do if they encounter bullying. We make sure that whistle-blowers who act in good faith will not be penalised and will be supported.
- All new members of staff are given guidance on the school's anti bullying policy and in how to react to allegations of bullying in their first weeks here. They are required to read the school's policy as part of their induction. We use appropriate assemblies to explain the school policy on bullying. Our PSHEE programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the school. The programme is structured to enforce the message about community involvement and taking care of each other.
- Other lessons, particularly RS, English and Drama highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable and by developing social skills.
- All our pupils are encouraged to tell a member of staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place in line with our policy on whistle-blowing.
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents. Records of any incidents are kept securely in the office of the Heads of Line in order that patterns of behaviour can be identified and monitored.
- We have a strong and experienced pastoral teams of Tutors, Heads of Line, and Houseparents who support the Head of Boarding and Deputy Headmaster and are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority, and are alert to possible signs of bullying.
- Our pastoral teams give support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both victims and bullies. Inset sessions are held regularly using outside experts.
- Our trained Supportive Listener is an important part of our pastoral support service, providing specialist skills of assessment and counselling. They are available to give confidential advice and counselling support to pupils who can refer themselves when they

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have social, emotional or behavioural concerns. On occasion, a member of our pastoral team may refer a pupil to the Supportive Listener.

- The college Chaplain will give support and guidance to pupils of all faiths who are able to refer themselves to him, perhaps at a time of family break-up, sickness or bereavement. The Chaplain will provide confidential advice and seek to encourage the development of tolerance, understanding and respect for others.
- Staff are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class and patrol the school site, particularly areas where bullying might occur. They are trained to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour.
- In boarding houses, there are strong teams of tutors supporting the Houseparents, 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. A member of the boarding house staff is always on duty to supervise the pupils.
- We encourage close contact between the Houseparents, parents and guardians, and would always make contact if we were worried about a pupil's well-being.
- All boarders and their parents are made aware of the contents of the college anti bullying policy and are aware that they can download copies from the school's web site. All boarders know how to report anxieties to their Houseparent or to another member of the pastoral team.
- Our Medical Centre, all our boarding houses and classrooms at Barlborough Hall display advice on where pupils can seek help, including details of confidential helplines and websites connecting to external specialists, such as Childline, Kidscape, Get Connected, Samaritans etc.
- All pupils have access to a telephone helpline enabling them to call for support in private.
- We provide leadership training to our Head Boy and Head Girl and their team of Captains which specifically covers the importance of offering support and assistance to younger and to vulnerable pupils at Mount St Mary's.
- We have banned initiation ceremonies designed to cause pain, anxiety or humiliation.
- Students are encouraged not to be by-standers, but to intervene when they see someone unhappy or being bullied.
- We reserve the right to investigate incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips and that occur in the vicinity of the school, involving our pupils.
- We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures.

CYBERBULLYING - PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

In addition to the preventative measures described above, we:

- Expect all pupils to adhere to the rules set out in the student planner for the safe use of the internet. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our IT Department monitors pupils' use.
- May impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet.
- Issue all pupils with their own personal school email address. Access to sites such as 'hotmail' is not allowed inside school.
- Offer guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying in PSHE lessons which covers blocking, removing contacts from 'buddy lists' and sharing personal data.
- Offer guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe.
- Mobile phones are not permitted in classrooms, or where they may cause annoyance to others.

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- The use of cameras on mobile phones is not allowed in washing and changing areas, or in the bedrooms of boarding houses.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH REPORTED BULLYING

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

- The member of staff to whom it was reported, or who first discovers the situation, will control the situation, 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 calmly explain the range of disciplinary measures that are potentially involved.
- The victim will be interviewed on his/her own and asked to write an account of events.
- The bully, together with all others who were involved, will be interviewed individually and asked to write an immediate account of events.
- The incident should be recorded by the Head of Line before it is given to the Deputy Headmaster who is responsible for keeping all records of bullying and other serious disciplinary offences.
- The Deputy Headmaster will inform the tutors, Houseparents of both the bully/bullies and the victim(s) as soon as possible. In very serious incidents, the Headmaster should 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 as set out in the school's Behaviour Management Policy; for example, detention, withdrawal of privileges or suspension. In particularly serious and/or persistent cases, the bully should expect permanent exclusion.
- 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.

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 in accordance with the school's Behaviour Management Policy.

- 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.
- In very serious cases, and only after the Headmaster been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to the Social Services. However, it is the policy of the 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. The school may suspend a pupil, either temporarily or permanently, in cases of severe and persistent bullying and in the event that the support put in place for the bully does not result in the modification of behaviour to an acceptable level.

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

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- If your child tells you about bullying, talk with them about ways in which together you can tell the school how they are feeling and what has happened. At school we do not tolerate bullying. We will listen to them and do everything we can to remedy the situation.
- The first and most important step is to listen. Allow them to tell their story in their own words. Don't respond by dismissing their experience as part of 'growing up'.
- If your child refuses to talk to you, suggest that they talk to another adult, in their safety network or safety circle. Before they speak to their parents or teachers about being bullied, some children may phone Childline.
- If you suspect your child is being bullied or is feeling unhappy about something, please contact the Form Teacher/Tutor, Head of the Junior Department, the Deputy Headteacher and do encourage your child to do likewise. It is important to 'tell' and talk about the problem.
- Talk to your child about what they are doing on the internet and try to keep the lines of communication open. Learn about the sites they are using and talk to your child about being safe online.

STAFF TRAINING

All staff will receive regular training on this policy which will include training on how to recognise the signs of bullying, how to support the victim and perpetrator of bullying, what support is available for children and professionals to deal with bullying and their legal responsibilities in relation to this policy.

RECORDING INCIDENTS OF BULLYING

All incidents of bullying will be recorded including incidents of bullying that happen outside of school on the school's sanctions records which will be held centrally for monitoring purposes and to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach adopted or to enable patterns to be identified. A further copy will be added to the child's file.

A record will also be kept on the Boarding House logs for boarders.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Parents and pupils are encouraged to use our complaints procedure (which is published on our website) if they feel that their concerns about bullying (or anything else) are not being addressed properly.

Useful Publications/Contacts for Parents:

- [The Anti-Bullying Alliance](#)

CYBER-BULLYING

Whilst Mount St Mary's College embraces the advantages of modern technology in terms of the educational benefits it brings, the college is mindful of the potential for bullying to occur. Central to the college counter bullying policy is the belief that, 'all pupils have a right not to be bullied' and that 'bullying is always unacceptable'. The college also recognises that it must, 'take note of bullying perpetrated outside college which spills over into the college'.

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The definition of bullying given in the document above makes explicit reference to defamatory texts or e-mails, offensive phone calls or any other offensive electronic messages or images. As a result of the pace of change in telecommunications, the college has produced an additional section to the Anti-bullying policy specifically to address cyber bullying. The success of this policy is reviewed annually by the cyber bullying working group which is chaired by the Deputy Headmaster and which has the Head of IT and representative pupil 'user groups'.

DEFINITION

By cyber bullying, we mean bullying by electronic media:

- bullying by texts or messages or calls on mobile phones
- use of mobile phone cameras to cause distress, fear or humiliation, to include 'happy slapping' – filming violent physical attacks
- posting threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating material on web sites, to include blogs, personal websites, social networking sites
- using e-mail to message others
- hijacking e-mail accounts
- making threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating remarks in chat rooms, social networking sites or by any form of electronic communication.

LEGAL ISSUES

Cyber bullying is generally criminal in character. The law applies to cyberspace.

It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information in any media including internet sites Public Order Act 1986; section 4a states that a person is guilty of an offence if, with intent to cause a person harassment, alarm or distress, he uses threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour, or disorderly behaviour, or displays any writing, sign or other visible representation which is threatening, abusive or insulting, thereby causing that or another person harassment, alarm or distress.

Malicious Communications Act 1988 states that any person who sends to another person a letter or other article which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive; a threat; or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender; or any other article which is, in whole or part, of an indecent or grossly offensive nature, is guilty of an offence if his purpose, or one of his purposes, in sending it is that it should cause distress or anxiety to the recipient or to any other person to whom he intends that it or its contents or nature should be communicated

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997; section 1 states that a person must not pursue a course of conduct which amounts to harassment of another, and which he knows or ought to know amounts to harassment of the other.

The Communications Act 2003; section 127 states that a person is guilty of an offence if he sends by means of a public electronic communications network a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character; or causes any such message or matter to be so sent. A person is guilty of an offence if, for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety to another, he sends by means of a public electronic communications network, a message that he knows to be false, causes such a message to be sent; or persistently makes use of a public electronic communications network.

COLLEGE COMMITMENTS

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The college educates its pupils both in the proper use of telecommunications and about serious consequences of cyber bullying

- through PSHE and in lessons and assemblies, and via Houses, the college will continue to inform and educate its pupil body in these fast changing areas
- the college trains its staff to respond effectively to reports of cyber bullying or harassment and has systems in place to respond to it
- the college endeavours to block access to inappropriate web sites, using firewalls, anti-virus protection and filtering systems
- the college audits, where appropriate and responsible, ICT communications
- the college informs parents of its policy on procedures and offers advice about the use of computers by pupils at home

COLLEGE STATEMENT

- Whilst education and guidance remain at the heart of what we do, the college reserves the right to take action against those who take part in cyber bullying.
- all bullying is damaging but cyber bullying and harassment can be invasive of privacy at all times. These acts may also be criminal acts.
- the college supports victims and, when necessary, will work with the Police to detect those involved in criminal acts
- the college will use, as appropriate, the full range of sanctions to correct, punish or remove pupils who bully fellow pupils or harass staff in this way, both in or out of school
- the college will use its power of confiscation where necessary to prevent pupils from committing crimes or misusing equipment
- all members of the college community are aware they must bring to the attention of senior staff any example of cyber bullying or harassment that they know about or suspect.

ADVICE TO STAFF

If you suspect or are told about a cyber-bullying incident, follow the protocol outlined below:

mobile phones:

- ask the pupil to show you the mobile phone
- note clearly everything on the screen relating to an inappropriate text message, to include the date, time and names
- make a transcript of a spoken message, again record date, times and names
- tell the pupil to save the message

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- go with the pupil and find the Houseparent, Head of Line or a member of the senior management team inform the Deputy Headmaster as a matter of course

COMPUTERS

- ask the pupil to get up on-screen the material in question
- ask the pupil to save the material
- go to the Head of IT office with the pupil and show the Head of IT the material
- print off the offending material straight away
- make sure you have got all pages in the right order
- inform the Houseparent, Head of Line and the Deputy Headmaster as a matter of course
- the normal procedures to interview pupils and to take a statements will then be followed and the Headmaster will be informed, particularly if a child protection issue is presented.

ADVICE TO PUPILS

If you believe you or someone else is the victim of cyber bullying, you must speak to an adult as soon as possible. This person could be a parent, your tutor, your Head of Line or Houseparent, or the Deputy Headmaster.

- Do not answer abusive messages but log and report them
- Do not delete anything until it has been shown to your Houseparent, the Head of IT or the Deputy Headmaster (even if it is upsetting, the material is important evidence which may need to be used later as proof of cyber bullying)
- do not give out personal IT details
- never reply to abusive e-mails
- never reply to someone you do not know
- stay in public areas in chat rooms

ADVICE TO PARENTS

It is vital that parents and the college work together to ensure that all pupils are aware of the serious consequences of getting involved in anything that might be seen to be cyber bullying.

Parents can help by making sure their child understands the college statement, and, above all, how seriously the college takes incidents of cyber bullying

Parents should also explain to their sons or daughters legal issues relating to cyber bullying.

If parents believe their child is the victim of cyber bullying, they should save the offending material (if need be by saving an offensive text on their or their child's mobile 'phone), and make sure they have all relevant information before deleting anything they should contact their son's or daughter's Head of Line or Houseparent

A meeting can then be arranged with the Head of Line or Houseparent, which may involve Deputy Headmaster and/or the Head of IT.

If the incident falls in the holidays, parents have the right to contact the parents of the other child involved. However, as stated in the Anti-Bullying Policy, the college reserves the right to take action against bullying perpetrated outside the college which spills over into the college.

E-SAFETY AT HOME

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Several sites offer helpful advice to parents, particularly with respect to how they can best monitor their child's use of the computer at home. Important and useful information can be found on the following site:

<http://www.parentscentre.gov.uk/usingcomputersandtheinternet/familycode/>

ICT CODE OF CONDUCT

This is displayed is explained and discussed with pupils in assemblies, PSHE classes and when using IT classes.

SUPPORT FROM NATIONAL BODIES

Advice and assistance relating to cyber bullying has been received from several national bodies including:

John Quinn, Development Director
Beatbullying
Rochester House, 4 Belvedere Road, London, SE19 2AT

Andrew Mellor
'Information on cyber bullying' Paper
Anti-Bullying Network

Cyberbullying websites:

- [DfE The use of social media for on-line radicalisation](#)
- www.saferinternet.org.uk
- [Advice on Child Internet Safety](#)