

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

Review by: Deputy Head
Last Review: August 2025
Next Review: August 2026

Please also refer to:

Behaviour and Discipline
Mobile phones and other devices
Online Safety
PSHCEE
Expulsion, Exclusion, Removal and Review

What is bullying?	3
Online Cyber-Bullying?	5
How do we prevent bullying?	5
What to do if there is a concern about bullying?	6
How bullying can be reported?	6
Next steps: what will happen once bullying has been reported?	7
Appendix: Sexual violence and sexual harassment by children	9

We are a community, where kindness is central to everything that we do. We want everyone to feel able to trust and respect each other, behave in a kind and thoughtful way and have a positive influence on others: pupils; the teaching and administrative staff; the domestic staff; the grounds staff. We are one community.

The aim of our anti-bullying policy is to help members of the school community to deal with bullying when it occurs and, even more importantly to prevent it. The policy adheres to relevant legislation and government guidance. It can be viewed by parents and prospective parents on the school website and is available in hard copy on request from the School Reception.

We strive to ensure that bullying plays no part in our School, and it is not tolerated in any form. Staff are vigilant in looking out for bullying and addressing it immediately, passing it on as appropriate, so that it can be dealt with promptly and thoroughly and support can be given to all those involved. We encourage our pupils to stand up to bullying and unkindness. If someone, or something, is causing worry or anxiety, pupils are expected to report it.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying can take many forms, it can be both physical and emotional and can be motivated by a number of reasons. Bullying, especially left unaddressed, can have a devastating psychological effect on individuals. It can be a barrier to their learning and have serious consequences for their mental and emotional health. All staff must be able to recognise and challenge any form of bullying and record it on the School's pupil information system; as with safeguarding, we must adopt the approach that 'it could happen here' and work to prevent, identify and swiftly to address concerns about bullying. Staff must also be aware that bullying can be a safeguarding concern and should pass on any information to the DSL team.

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group that:

- Is repeated over time, but can also be a one off
- Is a significant incident with intent to cause harm
- Intentionally hurt another individual or group either physically or emotionally
- May be motivated by prejudice against particular groups
- Might be motivated by actual difference between children or perceived differences

Bullying based on protected characteristics is taken seriously. The bullying log distinguishes instances involving protected characteristics.

Types of bullying include:

- Racial
- Sexual
- Disability
- Special Educational Needs
- Cyber (social media, mobile telephones, text messages, photographs and email)
- Religious
- Cultural
- Sexist
- Homophobic
- Transphobic
- Child is looked after
- Child is a carer

It takes many forms, direct and indirect, which can often interlink and can include:

- Physical assault
- Teasing
- Making threats
- Name calling
- Cyberbullying – bullying via mobile phone or online (for example social networks, photographs and instant messenger)

Many experts state that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve the perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship that makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, and be physical, psychological e.g. knowing what upsets someone, deriving from intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate an individual. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online. We aim to guide and educate pupils to ensure that they understand that there is a difference between being strong and assertive young people and being unkind. Staff receive regular training to raise awareness of bullying and how best to support pupils, both the victims and the perpetrators.

Within the context of Godolphin, we need to be particularly alert to bullying which may present itself in the following ways:

- Manipulating behaviour

This can be difficult to spot, but it is important to note when behaviour is deliberate, e.g. an individual is acting with intent to hurt, knowing that their actions will make someone sad or uncomfortable and can cause intimidation. This can often be the case in the following areas:

- Relational
- Spreading rumours
- Disclosing secrets
- Being treated with warmth and then coldness or indifference

- Intentional or deliberate exclusion

This can be emotionally hurtful and can take place in person or online. We should be alert to the following:

Cliques – understanding the dynamic of friendships and interactions

- Exclusive groups of either gender
- Excluding and not inviting
- Competition for social status and power struggles
- Controlling behaviour

- Language and body language

- Language is important and individuals can try and pass off targeted unkindness as 'banter' or 'just a joke' when clearly it is intended to sting, hurt or reinforce a hierarchy. Clever one-liners can be used to inflict pain.
- Body language can include aggressive stares, the 'look'

- Deliberately moving or hiding individuals' belongings, e.g. Surface Pro, school bag, musical instrument

ONLINE - CYBERBULLYING

Widespread access to technology, in particular social media, has created a type of bullying which can happen throughout the day and at home, with a potentially bigger audience and the possibility of content being forwarded beyond the school community.

Cyber-bullying is the use of electronic communications technologies (such as email, mobile phone and text messaging, digital photography, instant messaging, personal websites, chat rooms, blogs and social networking sites) to harass, intimidate, insult, abuse, embarrass or otherwise harm or cause distress to others. Liking and commenting on messages or posts, sharing images or content and anonymous posts can all be used for unkindness and bullying. On any platform, it is totally unacceptable.

As detailed in the Behaviour and Discipline Policy, when an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, has been seized by a member of staff, the HoY, Houseparent, Deputy Head/SMT can examine data or files, and ask the pupil to delete these where there is good reason to do so, or retain the material as evidence of a breach of school discipline/bullying. There is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's electronic device/mobile phone. If there is a concern that a confiscated mobile phone has evidence in relation to an offence or has a pornographic image of a child or extreme pornographic image, treat as a possible safeguarding concern and speak to the DSL who will raise the concern with the police/Children's Services.

We encourage parents to have an active interest and age-appropriate dialogue with their children about their online activity. Transparency about checking devices and discussing social media profiles, app use and what they view online is also helpful.

HOW DO WE PREVENT BULLYING?

Awareness of the importance of the school community, by promoting our school values and celebrating pupil's successes, is at the heart of our prevention strategy. Diversity is celebrated and pupils are encouraged to support each other. We are committed to raising awareness of differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice through our PSHE programme, assemblies, historical events, such as Black History month, and boarding activities, for example our international boarding celebration. This helps to create an atmosphere where all members of the School work together to ensure that bullying plays no part. Prefects are allocated to each year group to act as mentors for younger pupils and are given training to deal with allegations of bullying.

Measures in place to limit cyber-bullying at Godolphin are:

- First to Fourth Years put their phones in Yondr pouches during morning registration
- No hear, no see mobile phone policy for Fifth Year and above. Cyber-bullying and online safety are integral elements of our PSHE programme

- All pupils sign the Acceptable Use Policy at the start of the academic year
- We use Smoothwall as our web filtering and online activity monitoring system to keep pupils safe online. Smoothwall hits of concern are assessed and acted upon by the DSL.
- The Online Safety Committee meets half termly to highlight pupil concerns
- Parents, pupils and staff are invited to join the 'Wellbeing Hub' where they can access materials regarding online safety and there is a weekly entry in our School newsletter

WHAT TO DO IF THERE IS A CONCERN ABOUT BULLYING?

Any action is designed to resolve and prevent problems from escalating. Pupils and parents must alert the school to any incident of bullying. Whilst it is recognised that often pupils do not want to report on their peers, and parents are concerned about consequences for their child, they should understand that it is the right thing to do and the only way to stop the bullying. Every member of the community – pupils, parents and teachers – plays a part in being alert and reporting concerns, so it can be addressed and stopped, and those involved supported. We emphasize the importance of not being a bystander. It is important that pupils feel empowered to stand up to any inappropriate behaviour at school and beyond.

HOW BULLYING CAN BE REPORTED?

There are a variety of ways to report bullying at Godolphin:

- Pupils or parents can speak to their child's form tutor, HoY, Houseparent, one of the Health Centre nurses, School Doctor, Deputy Head or any member of staff to whom they feel comfortable talking
- Pupils can click on the 'My Concern' button on the SharePoint page of their computer.
- Pupils can write their concern on a piece of paper and put it in the worry box in their boarding house
- Pupils can talk to the Head. Alternatively, they could give a note to the Head's PA or email her (head@godolphin.org).

Here are some useful telephone numbers / e-mail addresses which are displayed in the boarding houses:

School Doctor 01722 336441

Deputy Head hillmanc@godolphin.org

Pastoral Lead baylissm@godolphin.org

Health Centre Sister (Sister Dandy) 01722 430645 (school) / briningd@godolphin.org

If you are a boarder, you may choose to contact an Independent Listener:

Mrs Kate Higginson

Telephone 07768 021543

Email address: higginsonkate00@gmail.com

If you want to talk to someone right away from home or School, you could also phone *Child Line* on 0800 1111 or contact the Children's Commissioner, Dame Rachel de Souza on 0800 528 0731 or email advice.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk.

Next steps: what will happen once bullying has been reported?

The school deal with bullying in different ways, depending on the severity and outcome at each stage. Support will be given to all pupils involved throughout.

STAGE 1

- Speaking to those involved directly to ascertain what has happened and get different views – pupils may be asked to write down their perspective of events. This may include screen shots from social media. This will ascertain whether bullying has taken place or an isolated friendship situation.
- If mistakes have been made and unkind things said, it is hoped that this will be admitted so that apologies can be made, lessons learnt, and resolution reached. It may be that at this stage, a pupil does not want further action to be taken.
- In line with the Behaviour and Discipline Policy, a sanction may be issued.
- Monitor the situation
- A bullying log will be made on the Pupil Information System so that pastoral staff can review and look out for patterns and evaluate the effectiveness of our approach to the prevention of bullying.

STAGE 2

If the situation is not resolved at Stage 1, or more serious concerns are raised then the following measures may be taken:

- Discussion with Head of Year or Pastoral Lead and possible discussion with parents; parents want to help and support in most cases; it is best for them to know what has happened.
- Discussion of the events, perspective accounts and further investigation, e.g. talking to friends, looking at social media
- Discussion on resolution strategy/mediation, agreements and date to revisit the concern.
- In line with the Behaviour and Discipline Policy, a sanction may be issued.
- The situation will be monitored

- A bullying log will be made on the Pupil Information System

STAGE 3

If the result of Stage 2 provides clear evidence of bullying, the following is likely to happen:

- Parents will be informed
- In line with the Behaviour and Discipline Policy, sanctions may be applied to the perpetrator which will reflect the seriousness of the situation and act as a deterrent, including exclusion, which may be necessary in cases of severe and persistent bullying.
- Support will be offered to the pupils involved – this may involve speaking to a school counsellor or support from a referral to outside agencies, e.g. Early Help.
- The situation will be monitored
- A bullying log will be made on the Pupil Information System

The School will **not** inform third parties of what steps are taken in each individual case, unless the concern reaches the threshold for involvement of the police in Stage 4.

STAGE 4 – MORE SERIOUS CONCERNS

Some forms of bullying are illegal and must be reported to the police. The following would reach the threshold for referral:

- Violence or sexual assault
- Serious theft
- Repeated harassment or intimidation, e.g. name calling, threats and abusive phone calls, emails or text messages
- Hate crimes

In cases involving concern about any of the above, either the Head or Deputy Head will contact the police and follow their advice.

Bullying incidents must be treated as a safeguarding concern where there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm and staff must report this immediately to the DSL in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

APPENDIX – SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT BY CHILDREN

As stated in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, staff must be aware when bullying can become a safeguarding concern, and staff must have an understanding and awareness that sexual violence and harassment can occur between two children of any sex. However, evidence suggests that it is more likely that girls will be victims of sexual violence and harassment (KCSIE). Safeguarding and bullying should not be viewed in isolation.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT BETWEEN CHILDREN?

The following advice is taken from KCSIE.

Sexual violence/sexual offences are described under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. They include: rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault.

Sexual harassment is 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. It is likely to violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or creates a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

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. Godolphin is 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 a laugh' or 'boys being boys'
- Challenging behaviours (which are potentially criminal in nature) such as grabbing bottoms, breasts, vaginas and penises. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.
- Recognising children with SEND can be especially vulnerable.

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

Godolphin prides itself on being a school of individuals, where pupils are encouraged to be themselves and collectively to be an open, tolerant and supportive community. It is a sad truth that pupils with SEND, LGBTQ+ or perceived differences are more susceptible to being bullied.

Staff must be aware of the potential for child-on-child abuse – that pupils are capable of abusing their peers (see Safeguarding Policy – any concerns must be raised immediately with the DSL). The following may also be examples of this:

GENDER BULLYING

Gender bullying may be characterised as name-calling, comments about appearance and attractiveness, inappropriate or uninvited touching, sexual innuendoes and graffiti with sexual content. The LGBTQ+ community are highlighted as suffering particular harm, children who are Lesbian, Bi, or TRANS can be targeted by their peers. In some cases, a child who is perceived by their peers to be LGBTQ+ (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBTQ+. Teaching staff must be able to recognise, and be willing to challenge, sexual content in verbal exchanges between pupils, and should also take action if this is happening online.

SEXTING

Sexting may also be used to intimidate, ridicule or punish. Staff should be alert to relationships that have a controlling element. In any context, even in a romantic relationship, the making of indecent images of a person under 18 may be treated as a crime, the sharing of the images by posting online certainly is.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment can be a form of bullying: this affects both genders. Staff need to be alert to whether any action could suggest sexual violence and should inform the DSL if they have any safeguarding concerns. Sexual harassment is characterised by:

- Sexual comments, such as telling jokes or making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names
- Sexual jokes or taunting
- Physical behaviours, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature
- Online sexual harassment, which might include non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos (often referred to as sexting), inappropriate comments on social media, exploitation, coercion or threats. Online sexual harassment may stand alone or be part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment/and or sexual violence.

HOMOPHOBIC OR OTHER SEXUAL ORIENTATION HARASSMENT

Homophobic or other sexual orientation harassment is particularly hard to identify because it can often take place covertly. Pupils can be reluctant to report it (not wanting staff to assume or know that they are gay). It nearly always involves verbal abuse, spreading rumours, or suggesting that something or someone is inferior, passing off abuse as banter, e.g. 'You are so gay', 'your clothes are so gay'. All homophobic language is to be challenged immediately. Sexual

harassment will not be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of 'growing up'; it cannot be dismissed as banter.

All inappropriate behaviours must be challenged, and pupils must be confident that any issue will be dealt with seriously.