



Ferndown  
Middle School

# FERNDOWN MIDDLE SCHOOL

## **POLICY:** **Anti Bullying**

**Author: Mrs A Barter, Headteacher**

**Date: January 2025**

**Review Body: School Standards Board**

**Date Adopted: 14 February 2025**

**Review Date: Spring 2026**

## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

**The Castleman Academy Trust, Governors, staff, parents/carers and pupils in CAT schools are firmly opposed to all forms of bullying. Every member of our community has a right to learn and work, free from fear and distress.**

### ***The role of the Trust Board and Governors***

The Trust Board and School Standards Board support Senior Leaders in all attempts to eliminate bullying from CAT schools. This policy statement makes it very clear that bullying is not acceptable and that any incidents of bullying that do occur are taken very seriously and dealt with appropriately.

The Trust Board reviews the effectiveness of the school policy regularly. The School Standards Board review the effectiveness of the policy through the Headteacher termly reports.

### ***The role of the CEO, SLT and Staff***

It is the responsibility of the Senior Leaders to implement the school anti-bullying strategy and to ensure that all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the school policy and know how to deal with incidents of bullying. Senior Leaders report to the School Standards Board and Trust Board about the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy on request.

It is the responsibility of all school staff to ensure that all children know that bullying is wrong, and that it is unacceptable behaviour both in and out of school.

All incidents of bullying are required to be monitored by the CEO and Senior Leaders and reported in the termly report to governors. The CEO and Senior Leaders may support teachers by investigating incidents of alleged bullying in more depth if required i.e. if parents or teachers ask for support.

The CAT expects all schools and staff to take all forms of bullying seriously and intervene to prevent incidents from taking place. Records are kept of all incidents that happen in school and must be reported to the Senior Leaders.

Opportunities throughout the school calendar are used to raise awareness of our students to the negative consequences of bullying. These could include:

- Anti-Bullying Week which promotes strategies to reduce bullying.
- Whole School Assemblies
- PSHCE lessons (Jigsaw)

The CAT expects all schools and staff to support all children in school and to 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.

Should a parent or carer wish to complain about or appeal against a decision taken by the SLT regarding bullying by a pupil or staff member, they should refer to the Trust Complaints Policy.

## 1. What is bullying?

The definition of bullying has been taken from [Bullying at school: Bullying - a definition - GOV.UK](#)

*There is no legal definition of bullying.*

*However, it's usually defined as behaviour that is:*

- *repeated*
- *intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally*
- *often aimed at certain groups, for example because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation*
- *It takes many forms and can include:*
  - *physical assault*
  - *teasing*
  - *making threats*
  - *name calling*
  - *cyberbullying - bullying via mobile phone or online (for example email, social networks and instant messenger)*

It can be deemed as bullying when the person is either partaking in any of the above oneself or inciting others to do so.

We believe that not all unkindness is bullying but we take all incidents seriously and will do everything possible to resolve and ameliorate the situation.

### **Examples of how our school works to prevent bullying.**

Involving pupils in:

- discussions about practical ways to prevent bullying.
- PSHCE programmes and assemblies.
- displays of appropriate work.
- national anti-bullying week.
- Drop box to report a bullying concern.

Raising awareness in staff, parents and governors through

- awareness-raising sessions for teaching and non-teaching staff.
- the school prospectus and other publications to parents/carers.

## 2. Strategies Used

### Prevention Strategies

We specifically set out to:

- Encourage children to 'treat others as you wish to be treated', a phrase which children of all ages are able to comprehend.
- Reinforce our school Value of Kindness, which permeates everything that we do.
- Make pupils fully aware that bullying will be treated as a serious breach of school rules and

that appropriate sanctions will follow any such behaviour.

- All suspensions or exclusions will be at the discretion of the Headteacher. Please refer to the School's Behaviour Policy.
- Encourage pupils to report any bullying incidents, whether they are involved or not through teaching assistants, class teacher, support staff and their peers.
- Help pupils understand that 'telling' would be viewed as responsible action on their part. Failing to report would be seen as condoning the action of the bully.
- Ensure all members of staff (teaching and non-teaching) know how to respond to bullying incidents and the agreed procedures for dealing with individual cases are followed. Ensure the Head of Year and Headteacher are aware of situations.
- Put in strategies to support the restoration of positive relationships.

Not all these strategies will be used all the time. Staff will identify actions to take to support a swift resolution to the incident, although some strategies will involve more in-depth and long-term work.

### **THE FIVE STEP APPROACH**

The 5-step approach to incident management provides a sound general process. This is outlined below and is followed by a more detailed analysis of possible responses.

1. **Be Available**  
Break the code of secrecy. Make it known that you are ready to listen. Provide immediate support.
2. **Investigate**  
Investigate every incident as soon as possible. Interview all parties individually at first to avoid intimidation and to produce an accurate report.
3. **Record**  
Record every incident in a manner which reinforces the school's anti-bullying policy. All parties should be encouraged to record the incident in writing and these accounts will be stored.
4. **Respond**  
Have a pre-agreed procedure for responding. The style should be 'matter of fact' and relate to the severity of the incident. Remind pupils of school policy. (See below: tiered system of response).
5. **Follow Up**  
Show that you have a committed position on bullying by following up an incident at a pre-arranged time. This will show pupils that the school supports them and wants to encourage positive behaviour.

## **IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGING THE FIVE STEPS**

### **Be Available**

- The need for swift and effective action may conflict with other demands on teacher time.
- It is preferable for the teacher who receives the initial report to pursue the initial investigation.

### **Investigate**

- It is a time-consuming process, particularly if a group of pupils or bystanders are involved.
- Notes should be taken to aid accuracy of reporting.
- A quiet secure location is required for the interview.
- Interviews require an objective approach to ensure fairness.

### **Record**

- Ensure the availability of witness statements (these are stored centrally and all staff have access.)
- Make time available for pupils to make a written record of the incident (support may be required for pupils with literacy difficulties).

### **Respond**

- Ensure teacher response provides models of behaviour and avoids aggressive reaction.
- The way a school determines and responds needs to avoid the use of 'power to inflict hurt or discomfort'.
- Pupils may be identified as having long-term needs requiring a positive teaching programme.

### **Follow Up**

- Further time is required to follow up incidents.
- Repetition of an incident may occur requiring a review of strategies.
- The follow-up should be purposeful to reassure pupils.

## **3. Reporting**

Students and parents should feel free to report bullying to any responsible adult within the school and in confidence. Responsible adults may be their Tutor, Class Teacher, Head of Year, Assistant Head, Deputy Head or any member of the Support Staff that they may come in contact with. Any reported incident should be fed to the Senior Leaders where the incident will receive a fair investigation.

Staff experiencing bullying from another member of staff, student or parents should follow the procedures outlined in the policy "Dignity at Work".

All investigations completed should be rigorous and involve due care and sensitivity to the victim. Note- taking should be made throughout the investigation and used as "hard" evidence for all parties concerned. At all stages the investigation should be transparent to all parties. The victim will be reassured that the bully will be spoken with and that the situation will be taken very seriously.

Parents will be informed promptly when any bullying issue comes to light. Regular updates will be provided as to the progress of the investigation and parents will be involved in the final outcome. The school sees the role of parents in two distinct ways.

- To support the school in its sanctions in dealing with the bully (ies) and provide further support, in addition to any external agencies who may work with the bully, to resolve the problem.
- To support the victim with any issues that may need to be tackled as a result of the incident, possibly with access to external agencies.

Determining appropriate sanctions for incidents will require sensitivity to the impact on the victim as well as consideration of any intentional or potential awareness of the consequences by the perpetrator. The investigation may also have to consider the possibility that the cyberbullying incident could be part of retaliation to a previous bullying endured by the perpetrator.

Staff will inform the victim (and their family) of the sanctions imposed, but the detail will be determined by the school. Confidentiality and dignity must be upheld at all times and it may not be appropriate to share great detail about sanctions.

Once the case has been thoroughly investigated and it is apparent that a form of bullying has taken place, investigating staff should make clear to the perpetrator (s) that what they have done is wrong and hurtful. Attempts may be made to resolve the problem through mediation or conflict resolution, but this will depend on the severity of the incident. Staff should encourage the bully to appreciate the hurt they have caused and hopefully learn from the incident – follow up work will be done on educating the bully to support them in moving forward. It should be made clear to all parties the sanctions that will be imposed and the reasons for these particular sanctions. At all times the safety and sensitivity of the victim is paramount.

In particular cases it may be deemed necessary to seek assistance from external agencies, such as the Educational Psychologist or CAMHS to support either the victim or the bully.

Once decisions and sanctions, if appropriate, have been taken, the school will follow up with the victim and the bully at a later date to ensure no recurrence has occurred and that a resolution has been made. The timetable will depend on the nature and severity of the incident. It will be discussed with both victim and perpetrator, so all parties are clear as to the outcome of any possible review.

#### **4. Cyberbullying**

Our School is aware that new technologies have a very positive power to transform our students' lives for the better. However, we are also aware of the fact that when things such as the Internet and mobiles are misused, they can cause real pain and distress. There is no doubt that we have to respond to the growing challenge of cyberbullying and as a result we will constantly monitor the way in which we respond to incidents and update our policy accordingly.

Cyberbullying can be defined as:

*“Any form of bullying that makes use of technology to deliberately upset or threaten a person. It can be conducted by a single person or a group of people and can cause significant distress.”*

*Electronic communication can include the use of computers, mobile phones, tablets and games consoles. Cyberbullying can take place through the use of emails, text messages, social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, chat rooms, interactive video games and in many other areas too. As technology advances, more potential avenues for cyberbullying open up.*

[\(The Law on Cyberbullying - A Guide to UK Laws on Cyber Bullying\)](#)

It may be an extension of face-to-face bullying but differs in several significant ways from other kinds of bullying.

- The invasion of home and personal space.
- The difficulty of controlling electronically updated messages.
- The size of the audience.
- The perceived anonymity of the perpetrator(s).
- The profile of the person doing the bullying and their target.

Although cyberbullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws that can apply:

Protection from Harassment Act 1997

Malicious Communications Act 1988

Communications Act 2003

Obscene Publications Act 1959

Public Order Act 1986

Computer Misuse Act 1990

As a school we will contact the police if we feel these laws have been broken.

Forms of cyberbullying:

- Threats of intimidation.
- Harassment or “cyber stalking” e.g., repeatedly sending unwanted texts or instant messages.
- Vilification/defamation.
- Exclusion or peer rejection.
- Impersonation/identity theft.
- Unauthorised publication of private information or images.
- Manipulation.

As with other methods of bullying, cyberbullying is unacceptable within the community of the school, be the victims’ students or adults within the school.

The school will investigate thoroughly any reported incident of cyberbullying in the same manner as with any bullying incident. Copies of any malicious messages, images, chats should be saved and shown to the adult investigating the report and added to any witness statements where possible.

Preventative Strategies

Our School does not tolerate cyberbullying. Staff, students and parents receive regular advice on E-Safety and reducing the risk of cyberbullying.

- Staff training sessions updating knowledge & understanding of E-Safety.
- Students learn, through the taught curriculum e.g., in PSHCE and ICT, how to keep safe; how to save malicious texts, messages and images for future reference in case an investigation needs to take place.
- Both students and staff are subject to, and have signed up to, an Internet Accepted User Policy (IAUP). Indeed, for each session on a computer all persons in the community have to agree to the schools IAUP.
- A piece of software constantly monitors computer usage of students identifying malicious, unacceptable words/phrases or inappropriate sites.
- Service providers for mobile telephone operators, social networking sites, instant messages services, email providers, video-hosting sites and chat rooms all have contact. details for moderation and blocking individuals or groups and students are reminded that these exist and should be used where appropriate.

### Reporting a cyberbullying Incident

Staff or students should try to keep a record of the abuse, particularly the date and time, content of the message (s), and where possible the sender's ID (e.g., username, email, mobile telephone number) or the web address of the profile/content. This can enable service providers to locate the content of an offending web page.

Keeping the evidence will help in any investigation into cyberbullying by the service provider but can also prove useful in showing what has happened to those who need to know, including parents, staff, pastoral care staff and the police.

This can be done by:

- On mobile telephones, keep/save any messages whether they be voice, images or text. Do not forward to another person.
- On instant messages, record, where possible and/or archive the conversation. They can be copied and pasted, saved and printed or a screen capture could be used. Be wary of copy/paste as the evidence can be edited and therefore prove useless.
- On social networking sites, video-hosting sites or other websites keep the site link, print the page or produce a screen grab of the page and save it.
- On chat sites, print the page or produce a screen shot of the page.
- On email, ask the victim to print it; forward the message to the member of staff investigating the incident and encourage them to forward and save any subsequent message. Preserving the whole message and not just the text is more useful as it will contain headers.

It is worth noting that the Headteacher has the power "to such an extent as is reasonable" to regulate the conduct of students when they are off-site as a result of the Education & Inspections Act 2006. This may relate to cyberbullying which we recognise is often likely to take place out of the school environment but may significantly impact on the school life of those students involved.

Similarly, the Act provides a legal protection for staff wishing to confiscate items from students, including mobile devices when they are causing a disturbance in a class or otherwise contravene school behaviour/anti bullying policies.

Staff may request students to reveal a message and show them the content of their telephones for



the purpose of establishing if bullying has occurred. Refusal by a student to do so might lead to an escalation in regards to the behavior policy. Staff may, in the presence of the student, search through a mobile device where the student is suspected of involvement.

Once an investigation begins, the first step is to attempt to identify the bully (ies). This may involve the SSCT/police. With new technology there appears to be a degree of anonymity but there should be ways to identify the perpetrator(s). However, it is important to recognise this may not be the bully as another person's telephone may be used or school network account. Locating where the information was originally sent from does not, by itself, determine who the bully is.

Questions for an investigator should include:

- Was the bullying carried out using the school network? If yes, liaise with the ICT department.
- Are there dependable witnesses to be interviewed?
- Was it carried out using a mobile telephone? If so, the service provider should be able to block the abuser. The police may need to be involved.
- Did the bully withhold their number? If so, the date and time of the message should be noted. Service providers can trace calls but again, the police need to be involved as mobile operators will only disclose this information to the police.
- Has a potential criminal offence been committed? If so, the police may have a duty to investigate.

### Sanctions

Once identified, the cyberbully(ies) will be sanctioned. The range of sanctions are similar to those for any bullying incident. Technology-specific sanctions may also be included such as limiting internet access for a period of time or removing the right to bring a mobile telephone into school. However, if a criminal offence has occurred, it may be necessary to pass the case to the police for further investigation and possible criminal charges. These may relate to:

- The Protection from Harassment Act (1997)
- The Communications Act (2003)
- Malicious Communications Act (1988)
- Public Order Act (1986)
- Obscene Publications Act (1959)
- Computer Misuse Act (1990)
- Defamation Act (1996)

The school will try to work with the bully to change attitudes and behaviour.

When delivering sanctions as listed above it is important to consider how cyberbullying and its impact differs from other forms of bullying. Key considerations include:

- Attempts by the bully to disguise their identity.
- The public nature of posted material and the extent of the humiliation.
- The difficulty of controlling copies of the material and gaining closure over the event.

Determining appropriate sanctions for incidents will require sensitivity to the impact on the victim

as well as consideration of any intentional or potential awareness of the consequences by the perpetrator. The investigation may also have to consider the possibility that the cyberbullying incident could be part of retaliation to a previous bullying endured by the perpetrator.

Staff will inform the victim (and their family) of the sanctions imposed, but the detail will be determined by the school. Confidentiality and dignity must be upheld at all times and it may not be appropriate to share great detail about sanction.

## **GUIDANCE and ADVICE WHEN DEALING WITH INCIDENTS OF BULLYING**

### **For pupils**

These ideas as to what you can do have been suggested by pupils.

If you are being bullied:

- tell someone **you** trust.
- remember you are not the one with the problem.
- if you can, ignore the bully.
- if you can, do not show you are upset.
- if possible, avoid being alone in the places bullying happens.
- be assertive if you can.
- walk away quickly and confidently, even if you do not feel that way inside.
- your safety is more important than your possessions, if you are in danger, don't hold on to them.

### **Friends**

- listen and talk it through.
- try to be sensitive.
- try not to leave the 'victim' on their own.
- persuade the person being bullied to talk to an adult.

### **Bystanders**

- even if you don't take part in bullying but see it and walk away, you are ignoring your responsibilities.
- get help.
- tell an adult.
- give sympathy to the person being bullied.

## **FURTHER ADVICE AND GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS/CARERS and TEACHERS**

### **Recognising the signs**

Someone who is being bullied may:

- be frightened of walking to or from school.
- insist on being driven to school.
- change the route to school.
- be unwilling to go to school.
- regularly have books or clothes damaged.
- have possessions 'go missing'.
- continually 'lose' money.
- begin doing badly in schoolwork.
- have unexplained bruises, scratches, cuts.
- ask for money or begin stealing money.
- become withdrawn or start stammering.
- have noticeable and prolonged changes in mood.

- become distressed.
- become bad-tempered.
- refuse to say what is wrong.
- lose appetite or start overeating.
- cry himself/herself to sleep or have nightmares.
- attempt or threaten to harm him/herself.

### **For Parents/Carers**

Any of the behaviour above may indicate other problems. However, if you become aware of and are concerned by any of this behaviour, and think your child is being bullied:

- encourage him/her to talk about the problem.
- reassure him/her of your support.
- try to listen calmly and not overreact.
- attempt to find out when and where the bullying takes place. Is there a pattern?
- contact the school to discuss the problem, ask to speak directly to the Head of Year.
- do not try to deal with the situation yourself.
- do not contact others directly – liaise with school instead.
- work with your child's teacher/form tutor to support your child within or outside school.
- if the bullying takes place outside school, report the matter to the police.

### **For Staff**

All members of staff, teaching and non-teaching, should deal with any incident of suspected or observed bullying by:

- talking to the pupil and giving reassurance
- taking action appropriate at the time
- Report the incident to the child's teacher/form tutor as soon as possible.
- producing a written statement of what has happened and the action taken and pass this to their line manager.

### **The teacher/form tutor will**

- arrange for support and reassurance for the pupil.
- interview the person responsible for the bullying.
- contact parents/carers of those involved.
- put in appropriate sanctions.
- inform the SLT, during regular Pastoral Meetings, of any incidents of bullying.
- if necessary, refer the matter to the Headteacher.
- work with pupils, parents/carers and other teachers to support those involved and prevent the bullying.
- keep an accurate and up to date record of all incidents.

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

This policy has been reviewed with the equality impact considerations as laid down in the trust's Equality Policy.