



COTHAM SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Version	Date	Summary of changes
1.0	Sept. 2016	
1.1	January 2019	Change to definition of bullying to cover a wider range Section added on cyber-bullying Sections added on specific guidance to students and teachers Section added in relation to the Equality Act 2010 Section added in relation to Peer-on-peer abuse
1.2	July 2020	Changes made following consultation with vulnerable students: Introducing the phrase on the balance of probabilities to make it explicit that the LC will have to make a judgement on the best evidence available. Reference to 'bully button' changed to 'Whisper button'
1.3	June 2022	Significant changes to definition and terminology, broadening the scope of the policy in line with KCSIE 2022 Inclusion of Appendix A and Appendix B
1.4	March 2025	Updating the dates of key legislation and DfE guidance Appendix B - Significant change to the Student section of the anti-bullying policy to create a student-friendly version of the policy in consultation and co-creation with the school's student council

Approved by Governors: March 2025

Review Date: March 2027

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Rationale

Cotham School believes that it is an entitlement of all children to be educated in an environment that is safe and free from bullying behaviour. We do not accept acts of bullying at Cotham School. Every person should expect to be able to come to school and feel safe and free from intimidation in any form, thus enabling each individual to achieve their full potential academically and personally.

Aims of this policy:

- To assist in creating an ethos in which attending Cotham School is a positive experience for all members of our community.
- To make it clear that all forms of bullying are unacceptable at Cotham School.
- To enable everyone to feel safe while at Cotham School and to encourage children to report all incidents of bullying.
- To deal with each incident of bullying as effectively as possible, taking into consideration the needs of all parties and of our community, and, as a result, to reduce the incidents of bullying.
- To support and protect those that experience bullying and ensure they are listened to.
- To help and support children displaying bullying behaviour to change their attitudes and understand why it needs to change.
- To liaise with parents/carers and other appropriate members of the school community.
- To ensure that all members of our community feel responsible for helping to reduce bullying.

All members of the school community are expected to uphold this policy by establishing and maintaining an atmosphere conducive to learning in a secure and orderly environment. Courtesy and mutual respect is expected from all.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Headteacher is ultimately responsible for the wellbeing of all children and staff. All staff, children, parents and governors should be made aware of the policy and the issues associated with bullying in schools.

Everyone has a responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all children and all staff have a duty of care to ensure that children at Cotham School are protected from harm. All staff should be alert to any potential incident of bullying and intervene when instances are noticed.

Governors have a duty to be fully informed on matters concerning anti-bullying.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is a form of anti-social behaviour that has no place in this school. Bullying is defined as physical, emotional, psychological or social harm that is **deliberately hurtful behaviour and repeated over time**. It can take many forms but the main types of bullying are:

- physical – hitting, kicking, pushing
- stealing or vandalism - taking or damaging belongings
- social - isolating children and encouraging others to do so
- verbal – name calling, insulting, making offensive remarks, making threats
- indirect – repeatedly spreading nasty stories about someone or repeatedly being made the subject of malicious rumours

Bullying can take place offline, i.e. in the physical world, or online e.g sending harmful messages on social media.

Bullying can make those that experience it feel distressed, nervous, hurt or worried. The person conducting harmful actions towards others may or may not be doing so on purpose. Bullying may also involve encouraging others to cause harm.

It is important to understand that bullying is rarely about one-off incidents. Whilst these may be very serious and must always be dealt with, **bullying behaviour involves one person or group having all the power and someone else having none (an imbalance of power)**, leaving someone feeling repeatedly helpless to prevent it or put a stop to it.

Bullying can sometimes also be discriminatory or an example of hate language, for example, racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic or sexist language.

Preventing, Identifying and Responding to Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination

We will raise the issue of bullying on a regular and proportionate basis throughout the school year in a variety of contexts and groups. We will deal with incidents of bullying swiftly, proportionately, discreetly and work to change poor attitudes where they exist and monitor our effectiveness.

Bullying behaviour is unacceptable by any member of the school community as no person has the right to make another feel uncomfortable or unhappy. Cotham School strives to ensure that all members of our school community are able to work in a safe and secure environment, free from humiliation, harassment, oppression and abuse.

All allegations of bullying are thoroughly investigated as such and not passed off as ‘banter’ between children. Cotham School actively encourages our children to feel confident about reporting instances of bullying through a variety of channels. Children are encouraged to report bullying in person to their tutor, Learning Co-ordinator (LC) or another trusted adult in school with whom they feel comfortable; however, they can also discreetly report bullying via the ‘Report Bullying’ link on the school website (which is sent directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and followed up within 24 hours) or anonymously report the bullying of someone else via the SWGFL Whisper tool that is also on the school website.

All staff receive annual training on the procedures for dealing with safeguarding, bullying and discrimination. ‘Anti-bullying Guidance for Staff (Appendix B) is compulsory annual reading for all staff along with this policy, and staff confirm in writing that they have read and understood this policy and guidance.

‘Anti-bullying Guidance for Students’ (Appendix A) is shared with all the children at the school through various mechanisms such as preventative work in assemblies, workshops, PHSE curriculum and tutor time programmes which focus on anti-bullying and discrimination of any kind, making use of specialist external agencies as much as possible.

Student-voice questionnaires are conducted each year on our children’s experiences and perceptions of bullying.

Central to Cotham School’s approach is a Restorative Justice approach whereby children are encouraged and supported to take responsibility for their actions and to consider how these have affected others. They are then supported by members of staff to take steps to repair the harm that has been done. The school may impose a sanction, such as a detention, internal suspension or fixed-term suspension alongside this restorative approach. Individual cases will be considered on their own merits and sanctions applied appropriate to each set of individual circumstances. Meetings with parents/carers of all children involved in bullying is important and, where children continue to repeatedly bully others despite school intervention, parents/carers and the child are made aware that they are placing themselves at risk of permanent exclusion.

The school does not tolerate discrimination of any kind including and all incidents will be swiftly dealt with. Harassment on account of race, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation is unacceptable. Racist, sexist and homophobic incidents and other incidents of harassment or bullying are considered as serious incidents. These incidents may, depending on individual circumstances, result in a conversation with our local PCSO. The police may be asked to intervene in the most serious incidents, particularly those that might break the law.

Child-on-child harm:

The school has a statutory responsibility to address any form of child-on-child harm which could include:

- Bullying (including online bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children;
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse);
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);

- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party;
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery);
- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm; and;
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

Contextual safeguarding approach to child-on-child harm:

Cotham School will minimise the risk of child-on-child harm by taking a contextual approach to safeguarding by increasing safety in the contexts of which harm can occur – this can include the school environment itself, peer groups and the neighbourhood.

Part of the risk mitigation approach will be to regularly educate our children about the signs, impact and what can be done about child-on-child harm, through assemblies, the tutor programme, PSHE curriculum and specialist workshops with external agencies.

Following any incidents of child-on-child harm, the DSL/Deputy DSLs will review and consider whether any practice or environmental changes can be made in relation to any lessons learned. This can include making changes to staffing and supervision, making changes to the physical environment and considering the utilisation and delivery of safeguarding topics in the curriculum.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment:

Reference to Keeping Children Safe In Education 2024 and guidance [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges 2021](#) will be made in relation to taking protective action. Cotham School will take the following actions when responding to incidents of sexual violence and sexual harassment:

- Incidents will be reported immediately to the DSL/ Deputy DSL who will undertake further assessment of what action should be taken proportionate to the factors that have been identified. [The Brook - Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Assessment Tool](#) will be utilised to inform assessment of risk and what actions to subsequently take. This may include seeking specialist advice and guidance from [Be Safe](#).
- DSLs/Deputy DSLs will take **proportionate** action and consider whether a case can be managed internally, through early help, or should involve other agencies as required
- When an incident involves an act of **sexual violence**, the starting point is that this should be passed on to police **regardless** of the age of criminal responsibility (10 years old). This will be reported directly via 101 for recording purposes and accountability. This is on the understanding that the police will take a welfarist

approach rather than a criminal justice one. A concurrent referral to social care must also be made. A strategy can be requested where education professionals can voice explicit concerns of criminalisation in a multi-agency context.

- When the children involved require a statutory assessment either under s.17 or s. 47 of the Children Act 1989 a referral to social care will be undertaken.
- Where the report includes an online element, Cotham School will follow guidance from [Searching, screening and confiscation at school - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk) and [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk).
- Risk assessments and or safety plans will be developed for individual children who have been involved in an incident.

Online Bullying

The use of the internet and mobile phones to bully is a very serious matter and can constitute a criminal offence. In the United Kingdom, there are criminal laws that can apply in terms of harassment or threatening and menacing communications, which would apply to children of secondary school age.

Children involved in the electronic recording of bullying incidents will receive a high level sanction such as a Headteacher's Detention or a Fixed Term Suspension as follows:

- for the child(ren) conducting the bullying;
- for the child(ren) recording the bullying on a device;
- for any child found to have viewed or passed on any recording and who does not immediately report this to the school.

At Cotham School, we will deal with reported cases of online bullying in the following way:

- Supporting the child experiencing the bullying
- Give reassurance that the child has done the right thing by telling someone
- Investigate all allegations of online bullying by collecting witness statements and evidence
- Contact the parents/carers of the child reporting the bullying to reassure them that the matter has been reported and will be dealt with
- Make sure the child reporting the issue knows not to retaliate or return the message
- Ask the child reporting the bullying to think about what information might be available on the internet about them.
- Help the child to keep relevant evidence for any investigation e.g. by transferring messages/files they've received for the school's records, by taking screenshots and noting web addresses of online bullying forums (but ensuring that the law is not broken i.e. any suspected images of child nudity or child pornography must not be viewed by staff; the device must be confiscated and police contacted immediately)
- Check that the child reporting the bullying understands simple ways to keep themselves safe online e.g. by changing contact details, blocking contacts or leaving a chat room
- Take action to contain the incident when content has been circulated:
 - If we know who the child responsible is, ensure the removal of the content after the school has had the opportunity to capture screenshots and witness content where possible by confiscating the phone and, if necessary, the Designated

Safeguarding Lead looking at content on the child's phone, along with the child and another member of staff, as long as there is no suspicion of the phone containing images of child nudity or child pornography

- Contact the host of any social media sites to make a report to get the content taken down

Equalities Duty

The school takes very seriously any bullying that falls under the protected characteristics laid out in the Equality Act 2010. Bullying of a racist, sexist, ableist, genderist, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic nature is not tolerated. Schools have a legal duty to ensure that bullying that falls within these categories is dealt with in schools. Under the Education and Inspections Act (2006), Headteachers, with the advice and guidance of governors and the assistance of school staff, must identify and implement measures to promote good behaviour, respect for others and self-discipline amongst students and to prevent all forms of bullying which includes the prevention of discriminatory bullying. These types of bullying will always be challenged and, where necessary, sanctions issued. When such incidents occurs, the school will:

- Challenge the language or attitude in the moment with staff explaining why it is offensive and will not be tolerated at Cotham School to the child
- Log the incident on CPOMS
- Follow-up with the child having an educative workshop with a member of the Inclusion team for a first instance of such language or attitude
- Contact parents/carers and issue a high-level sanction for any subsequent incidents
- Meet with parents/carers and refer to external agencies, where appropriate and available, for repeated incidents of this nature
- Consider involving the local PCSO to explain the nature of hate crime
- Refer an incident to the police if the law is believed to have been broken

Persistent discriminatory attitudes could lead to a child being permanently excluded.

The school educates our children thoroughly on acceptance and respect for diversity, often involving other organisations such as SARI, Off The Record, TIGER and Each Education to support in our education.

Equality Impact Statement

We will do all we can to ensure that this policy does not discriminate, directly or indirectly. On review we shall assess and consult relevant stakeholders on the likely impact of the policy on the promotion of race equality, equality for disabled persons, gender equality and community cohesion using an appropriate Equality Impact Assessment. The policy may be amended as a result of this assessment.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed every two years and its implementation and effectiveness assessed. It may also be reviewed and amended in consultation with all stakeholders, in the light of events or experience.

Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our:

- Equality and Community Cohesion Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- The Student Code of Conduct including Acceptable Use of ICT

Appendix A - Additional Guidance for Staff

The term staff includes teachers and associate staff. We all have a duty to implement the school policy on bullying. Every allegation of bullying must be taken seriously.

- The member of staff receiving such a complaint must respond initially and, where necessary, pass the matter on to the tutor or Year Team (Learning Coordinator and/or Year Team Assistant).
- If the incident warrants it, the member of staff who has received the complaint should take statements and help collect evidence before passing the matter to the Year Team(s) of all the children involved.
- When behaviour issues are logged on the school's SIMs system, where bullying is suspected to be a factor, staff are also required to log the incident on the school's Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS).
- When there is not a distinct behaviour issue but bullying is suspected, then the incident should be logged straight onto CPOMS.
- At this point, the Year Team, or a member of the Core Safeguarding team, will take up the incident and see it through to completion.
- Any available witnesses will be interviewed separately from each other and from the child reporting the bullying, and their statements will be signed and dated by them.
- A decision should then be made by the Learning Coordinator as to whether, on the balance of probabilities, the circumstances indicate that bullying, as distinct from other forms of unacceptable behaviour, has occurred. In the course of this procedure, enquiries should be made to ascertain whether or not the alleged student who has caused harm of a bullying nature has been involved in similar incidents involving this child or other children.
- When bullying is clearly identified, the **child reporting** that they are being bullied **must be reassured** that this will not be allowed to happen again and that they should tell an adult if any further incident takes place.
- The child reporting bullying may be offered support to restore self-esteem and confidence
- Where appropriate a restorative justice meeting will be held, where the children are given the opportunity to establish a positive relationship.
- Parents/carers will usually be kept informed.
- Sanctions will be used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties. Sanctions will be in accordance with those listed in the school's Behaviour Policy.
- Where appropriate, recourse to external agencies may be taken e.g. SARI or a suitable anti-bullying mentoring programme or workshop.
- In situations where incidents happen outside of school or involve a factor external to the school, including cyber-bullying, the school will consider referral to the police.
- Safeguarding procedures will be followed when child protection concerns arise.

Staff investigating incidents of bullying should consider the following:

- Listen to and don't judge the child that is reporting the bullying or the child alleged to have bullied until you have heard both sides of the story and feel educated enough to make an informed decision.
- Talk to the child alleged to have conducted the bullying.
- Tell the child reporting the bullying what you are doing to make sure that they feel comfortable with every step taken.
- Talk to parents of the child reporting the bullying and the child alleged to have bullied.

- Be there for the child reporting the bullying or the child alleged to have bullied to talk to if they feel it necessary.
- Be aware of the possibility of a long and complex history behind the story.
- Be ready for the possibility of the child reporting the bullying becoming the child alleged to have bullied.

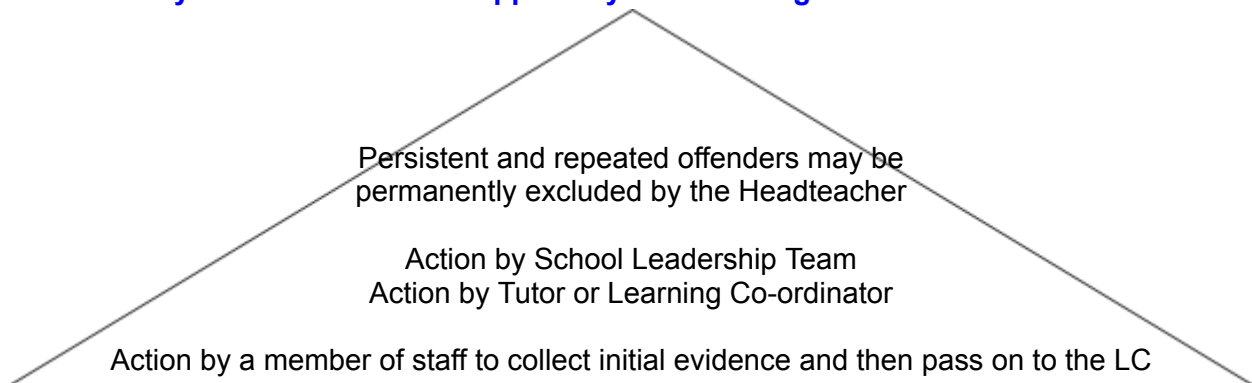
Some further guidance for all staff:

- The student alleged to be bullying may be unaware of the unhappiness they are causing. Be constructive. It might be desirable to involve the whole class and/or the tutor/teacher to plan an activity for the tutor group that could support both children that could focus on relationships (consult the pastoral team and see the PSHE material on the subject).
- Keep an eye on the child experiencing the bullying. Check formally whether the bullying is continuing or has ceased. Be aware that children experiencing bullying are sometimes reluctant to admit that bullying is continuing because they feel that ‘telling’ has not worked and has made things worse.

Working with the child(ren) conducting the bullying behaviour, and sanctions

Once the child conducting the bullying behaviour is identified, steps should be taken to change their attitude and behaviour, as well as ensuring access to any support that is required. Trained school staff are available to perform ‘restorative justice/conferencing’ activities between the children concerned. Parent/carer permission does not need to be sought for this though it would be expected by the school in most circumstances.

A hierarchy of sanctions will be applied by the following members of staff:



Factors to consider when determining the appropriate sanctions:

- Our policy should be followed consistently but we must consider the Special Educational Needs of all parties involved.
- The longer term impact on the child experiencing the bullying: was the child conducting the bullying acting anonymously, was the material widely circulated and humiliating, how difficult was controlling the spread of the material?
- The motivation of the child conducting the bullying: was the incident unintentional or retaliation to bullying behaviour from others?
- Technology-specific sanctions for children engaged in online bullying behaviour could include limiting internet access for a period of time or removing the right to bring a mobile phone into school.

Appendix B - Student version of Cotham School's anti-bullying policy

RUDE

behaviour is unintentionally hurtful

What does it look like?

- 'bad' looks,
- answering back,
- leaving people out accidentally

MEAN

behaviour is intentionally hurtful but only happens once.

What does it look like?

- name calling,
- teasing, pushing,
- hitting, kicking,
- threatening,
- spreading rumours,
- starting an argument
- leaving people out on purpose

BULLYING

Is when someone says or does something intentionally hurtful and they keep doing it

What does it look like?

- name calling,
- teasing, pushing,
- hitting, kicking,
- threatening,
- spreading rumours,
- starting an argument
- leaving people out on purpose

COTHAM SCHOOL'S ANTI-BULLYING POLICY (STUDENT VERSION)

What happens when bullying is reported?

- The student experiencing the bullying is spoken to, along with possible witnesses
- The student(s) carrying out the bullying behaviour are spoken to about what has been happening
- Any other evidence e.g. social media screenshots, are looked at
- All parents/carers are kept fully informed
- Students who have been found to have bullied others will receive sanctions according to the school's behaviour policy
- If bullying persists, parent/carers may be invited into a meeting with the Headteacher
- Some work may be done with the students found to be bullying to change their behaviour
- A record will be made on the school files of all students involved

What is bullying?

In our school, bullying behaviour is when someone is being repeatedly mean to someone, on purpose, over a period of time. It is also when there is an imbalance of power because it is a group of people bullying one other person, or the person doing the bullying is older and/or much bigger.

Bullying is NOT - arguments or fallouts with friends, an accident or being called a name on one occasion.

Bullying can be:

- Physical
- Verbal
- Online (social media)
- Social (peer pressure)
- Discriminatory (racist, homophobic, transphobic, sexist, ableist)
- Body shaming
- Spreading horrible rumours

How can I report bullying?

Talk to someone
Talk to a trusted adult - it could be any member of staff or an adult at home

Email the school
You can email your Learning Coordinator or use safeguarding@cotham.bristol.sch.uk

Use the school's online reporting forms:

1. The 'Report Bullying' link on the school's website
2. The anonymous SWGFL Whisper tool on the school's website

What to do if...

Someone else is being bullied?

1
Warn

Warn them for speaking out!

2
Help

Help them to solve the problem

3
Report

Report it to a trusted person

4
Support

Support someone who has been bullied

You're being bullied?

1
Warn

Warn them for speaking out!

2
Help

Help them to solve the problem

3
Report

Report it to a trusted person

4
Support

Support someone who has been bullied

5
Seek help

Seek help from a trusted person

6
Remember

Remember the problem is with them not you.

What can we all do?

TO DO Think and report

- Be kind.
- Be considerate.
- Be respectful.
- Be honest/authentic.
- Think beyond yourself!

Remember our school values:

Achievement | Diversity | Respect

EVERYONE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ANTI-BULLYING IN OUR SCHOOL!

Useful Links

Stonewell: www.stonewell.org.uk
Useful information and links on LGBTQ issues.

Advisory Centre for Education: www.acfe.org.uk
Registered charity independent of central or local government giving free advice and support to parents of children in state schools.

BBC Schools: www.bbc.co.uk/schools
Includes information about bullying.

Bully Online: www.bullyonline.org
Information on bullying for teachers, children and schools which details the legal procedures available. This site also has support groups for teachers.

Bullying Online: www.bullyingonline.org
Useful information and links on bullying and related issues for parents, children and teachers.

Childline: www.childline.org.uk
Primarily a helpline for children but has useful information and links on bullying. Childline in Partnership with Schools encourages schools to support students in setting up anti-bullying projects.

The Children's Society: www.thechildrenssociety.org.uk
Bullying information for parents on how to help your child - includes giving information and practical guidance.

Edscape: www.edscape.org.uk
Advice for children, parents and teachers as well as training and sample policies.

Schools Out!: <http://www.schoolsout.org.uk>
Campaigns for better support networks for gay and lesbian students and clearer guidance for teachers on issues of sexuality.

Teachmeanit: www.teachmeanit.co.uk
Aims to provide easy access to the best educational websites including information on bullying for teachers, parents and young people.

