

<b>Policy Name:</b>	<b>Anti Bullying Policy</b>
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*This policy is applicable to the whole school including Early Years*

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## **Shaping Brighter Futures**

***We provide an inspiring and joyful education that will be remembered for a lifetime and which empowers our children with the confidence, knowledge, skills and character to thrive. We are shaping brighter futures.***

### **School Aims:**

*At St Neot's education is full of fun and good humour. We want every child to enjoy their time at school, to feel part of a community that holds family values at the core. We are determined that our children not only learn outdoors but learn about the outdoors. We want to create well-rounded, independent thinkers that are not only confident in their academic ability but hold the soft skills necessary for Senior School and the world ahead.*

### **The St Neot's Way is:**

- *Where we promote a true sense of community, family values, a love of the outdoors and a commitment to having fun.*
- *Where every child comes into school feeling safe, valued and with a broad smile on their face; and who returns home with uplifting stories to tell.*
- *Where a first class, personalised, rigorous academic journey is matched by an enriching, broad and challenging co-curricular programme.*
- *Where the children's character, contribution and service is as valued as their academic success.*
- *Where the children's physical wellbeing is surpassed by their mental wellbeing.*
- *Where highly skilled, passionate and dedicated teachers, working in first class facilities, are full of ambition for themselves and the children in their care.*

### **St Neot's Values**

*Happiness Kindness Self-Belief Honesty Respect*

### **Aims, Objectives and Key Elements**

We believe that St Neot's is a very happy, caring and well-disciplined school where incidences of bullying (or child-on-child abuse) are rare, but that it is right to be vigilant. Bullying will not be tolerated. The sanctions for it can be strong, including excluding a pupil from St Neot's, if deemed appropriate. It is everyone's responsibility to prevent it happening and with this in mind, this policy includes guidelines which all pupils, parents and staff should follow. This policy should be read alongside other relevant school policies, in particular:

- SG2 Safeguarding Policy
- SG3 Behaviour, Sanctions and Rewards Policy

No-one should underestimate the potential psychological damage that both physical and emotional bullying can cause, often far in excess of the intentions of the bully. It is our fundamental belief that every pupil has the right to pursue his or her education, free from adverse interference from others. We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all pupils in which our

pupils can reach their full potential in all areas, increasing their self-esteem and being uniquely valued by others. This includes respecting each other's space, privacy and differences, treating everyone with kindness and sensitivity and offering support and encouragement to each other.

This policy is written with due regard to current DfE advice [Preventing and Tackling Bullying \(July 2017\)](#) and [Cyberbullying: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff](#) and as well as [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2024\)](#)

The key elements of the School's Anti-Bullying Policy are:

- Bullying (verbal, physical, prejudiced based or online) is not tolerated. Everyone is expected to ensure that it does not happen and each person has the responsibility to tell - this is not 'telling tales'.
- Bullying is wrong and all members of the School, children and adults, have a responsibility to report any incidents.
- Any reports of bullying will be taken seriously.
- The Headmaster should be informed of any incidents of bullying.
- The Headmaster will decide whether parents should become involved.
- Teachers should use the curriculum to support messages about acceptable behaviour - drama, discussion groups, role play, PSHE lessons, assemblies etc.
- The prevention of bullying is everybody's business.
- Staff are to log any confirmed bullying, racist concerns or sexual harassment concerns onto CPOMS
- St Neot's adopts a zero-tolerance approach to any bullying issues. All staff will challenge any abusive behaviour between pupils that comes to their notice and will report any issues of this nature to the DSL immediately. Please read the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy for further details about dealing with child-on-child abuse.
- Children are actively taught and encouraged to be aware of the risks of online behaviours, including cyber-bullying, and how to deal with it in an age appropriate way with key skills such as reporting and reaching out to a trusted adult.
- The school takes a zero-tolerance approach to prejudiced based behaviours, including those against those with protected characteristics. Children are actively encouraged and taught to be inclusive, considerate and aware of the protected characteristics.

### **Definition**

There is no legal definition of bullying. However, the DfE defines it as behaviour that is:

- repeated
- intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally
- often aimed at certain groups because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation

It takes many forms and can include:

- physical assault and threats of harm
- verbal abuse (including name calling)
- emotional abuse (including social isolation)
- sexual abuse
- cyberbullying (any form of bullying behaviour via electronic means).

Bullying is considered unacceptable behaviour at St. Neot's School.

Bullying can take on many forms whether it be physical, sexual, verbal, cyberbullying (including social media and instant messaging) or emotional (by excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours), repeated over time. It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. Bullying can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. Children may also be bullied because they are adopted or because they are carers of relatives. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidatory. We realise that bullying has the potential to cause psychological damage or even suicide.

Bullying may occur directly or through cyber-technology (social media, mobile phones, photographs and email). Bullying may involve actions or comments that are motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability. Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time. We always treat it very seriously. It conflicts sharply with the school's policy on equal opportunities, as well as with its social and moral principles.

Bullying is often repeated over a period of time, where it becomes difficult for those bullied to defend themselves.

It is recognised that a bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern where there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

We are aware that all settings, in which children are provided with services, should have in place rigorously enforced anti-bullying strategies.

We have a 'zero tolerance' policy towards this kind of behaviour. If witnessed by, or reported to staff, action will be immediate. The guidelines for sanctions as listed below will be immediately invoked and staff will report the incident to parents along with the action which has been taken.

We recognise the additional vulnerability of some children and the extra barriers they face to getting help, because of their race, gender, age, religion or sexual orientation, social background and culture. We also recognise the particular vulnerability of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Serious or repeated incidents will be reported to the Headmaster. Parents of all the children involved will be contacted and we will notify them of the action taken and the sanctions applied. The Headmaster may apply a fixed term suspension or exclusion of a pupil for bullying, at his discretion.

### **Cyberbullying: Definition**

Cyber-bullying is an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group, or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly over time, against a victim who cannot easily defend himself/herself.

By cyber-bullying, we mean bullying by electronic media:

- Bullying by texts or messages or calls on mobile phones
- The use of mobile phone cameras to cause distress, fear or humiliation
- Posting threatening, abusive, radical, defamatory or humiliating material on websites, to include blogs, personal websites, social networking sites
- Using e-mail to message others
- Hijacking/cloning email accounts

- Making threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating remarks on social media platforms, to include Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok and Ratemyteacher
- Grooming a child online, to sexually exploit or radicalise them

### **Bullying – Possible Signs in Young People**

A child may indicate by his or her behaviour that he or she is being bullied. If you become aware of any of the following changes in behaviour, report your concerns to the DSL (Deputy Head), a member of SLT or a DDSL.

Parents might notice that children may:

- Be frightened of going to or from school or ask to be driven by family, only
- Be unwilling to go to school, or regularly feel unwell on school days
- If travelling to school independently, change their route to school
- Come home regularly with clothes or books damaged or destroyed
- Become withdrawn, start stammering, become distressed or stop eating
- Cry themselves to sleep
- Have nightmares and even call out, "Leave me alone"
- Have unexplained bruises, scratches and cuts
- Have their possessions 'go missing'
- Ask for money or begin to steal money (to pay the bully)
- Continually 'lose' their pocket money
- Refuse to say what is wrong
- Give improbable excuses to explain any of the above
- Attempt self-injury

Members of staff will be trained to recognise any of these signs as reported by parents.

Members of staff might notice that pupils display the following signs:

- Underachievement or a change in attitude
- Personality changes
- Lack of confidence or withdrawn from social activity
- Being late for school
- Hanging back or staying late after lessons
- Losing books, equipment and belongings
- Asking to borrow money
- Having torn or damaged clothing
- Having bruises and cuts
- Unusual 'social' groupings
- Individuals or groups of pupils (particularly older pupils) waiting for someone who is not known to be their friend or a member of their social group

### **Preventative Measures**

We take the following preventative measures, raising awareness of staff through training, so that the principles of the school policy are understood, responsibilities are known, action is defined to resolve and prevent problems and sources of support are available:

- We use appropriate assemblies to explain the school policy on bullying. Our Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) 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, highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by teaching social, moral and spiritual values (in line with our SMSC policy) that show bullying to be unacceptable and by developing pupil's social skills.
- We have a strong and experienced pastoral team of Form Tutors, Heads of Year as well as the Deputy Head. They are experienced in handling any incidents as an immediate priority, and are alert to possible signs of bullying.
- 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.
- Our Health Hub displays advice on where pupils can seek help, including details of confidential helplines and websites connecting to external specialists, such as Childline.
- All pupils are aware of the Childline telephone helpline, enabling them to call for support if required. The number is displayed in key areas around the school.
- We do not tolerate initiation ceremonies designed to cause pain, anxiety or humiliation.
- 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, including those which involve the use of mobile phones, internet and social media platforms.
- Staff are trained regularly, so the principles of the policy are understood, legal responsibilities are known and procedures are defined
- The School participates in national events such as Anti-Bullying Week, to raise awareness of this issue. Children are encouraged to celebrate difference and diversity and encourage an open discussion and acceptance of others.
- Children are aware of the behaviour expectations and the related, age-appropriate consequences. Children know how to seek help and guidance at school and we actively encourage open dialogue with a resolution focused approach.

We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures.

### **Cyberbullying Preventative Measures**

In addition to the Anti-Bullying preventative measures described above, St. Neot's School take the following actions:

- Ensure that network activity and data management are monitored closely
- Expect all pupils to adhere to its charter 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, emails etc
- Issue all pupils with their own personal school email address. Access to sites such as "hotmail" is not allowed.
- Adheres to the BECTA guidelines regarding E-teaching and the internet
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying in PSHE and ICT lessons
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe
- Mobile phones are not permitted in School
- Provide information and training sessions for parents

- Listen to children if they are being cyberbullied and act upon the information given according to the policy
- All staff have completed Channel training in relation to the PREVENT strategy

### **Values Ambassadors**

The school operates a Values Ambassador scheme in order to promote kindness, acceptance and tolerance throughout the School. The initiative is outlined in the Behaviour, Sanctions and Reward Policy (SG4) and runs from Nursery to Year 8, with slight adaptations to fit the age and developmental stage of the children. These children are closely supported by the staff.

### **Strategies to Manage Incidents of Bullying**

Incidents of alleged bullying and acts of unkindness will be investigated by the member of staff to whom it is reported and notes will be taken. Notes should be shared with the Form Teacher, Head of Year and/or Designated Safeguarding Lead who will further pursue the investigation. All notes will be logged via CPOMS. The school has a duty to ensure that children observing acts of bullying have a responsibility for bringing such behaviour to the attention of an adult. We believe that taking no action is not an option.

### **Management and Support for the Victim**

- Parents of aggressors and victims will be informed of incidents of bullying, if the form teacher and/or DSL are satisfied that proof has been established. The sanctions imposed will follow our Behaviour, Sanctions and Reward Policy (SG4).
- Victims of bullying will be given appropriate support and advice. This could be within school from the Pastoral Team or Learning Support Department.
- It may also, on occasions, be necessary to involve outside agencies such as the child's GP, counsellor or other outside agencies. We will work with the child and their families to facilitate this support.
- Ensure that monitoring systems are in place in case the bullying continues. For example, is the pupil attending the Health Hub with increasingly regulatory, is there a decline in academic performance, do they seem quieter than normal, are staff concerned?
- The Form Tutor should informally regularly check in with the victim, after the complaint of bullying.
- The Head of Year and Deputy Head/DSL may also arrange a designated 'check in' time with the pupil.
- Staff may need to look at seating plans and group dynamics in group work to support those involved.
- Strategies will be discussed with the victim including:
  - Encourage the victim to be assertive
  - Ignoring the comments; pretend not to hear
  - Walking away quickly; use body language to look determined, strong and positive
  - Shouting "No, go away" as loudly as possible
  - Encouraging the victim to tell a trusted adult in school if bullying is repeated agreeing a safe place to get help (such as the Health Hub)
  - Look at ways for the pupil to broaden their friendship groups by joining a lunchtime or afterschool club or activity.
  - Discuss bullying in assembly, in the form time or PSHE, and ask the class to suggest possible solutions.



- o If bullying is about a particular issue (i.e: disability), raise awareness during form times, not focused on a particular child.
- o Ask another student to befriend and support the victim.

#### **Management and Support for the Aggressor**

- Parents of aggressors and victims will be informed of incidents of bullying, if the form teacher and/or DSL are satisfied that proof has been established. The sanctions imposed will follow our Behaviour, Sanctions and Reward Policy.
- The pupil must be helped to understand the consequences of their actions and understand that there must be no further intimidation. The sanctions for this incident, as well as future sanctions should the behaviour continue, will be discussed.
- It may be appropriate for a meeting to take place between the aggressor and the victim so that an apology can take place, This can only be done if carefully facilitated and if the victim is happy for this to take place. The purpose is to find a way forward for both parties.
- The pupil may need support in facing their peer group - discuss what they will say to others.
- The aggressor will be educated to change their bullying behaviour using some supportive measures such as mentoring talks with their Form Teacher or a member of the Pastoral Team.
- It may also be necessary to look at referrals to outside agencies to enable support to be given to the child involved. We will work with the child and their families to facilitate this support.

#### **Strategies for Ensuring that Bullying is Reported**

- All pupils must be made aware of their rights through our expectations and by reminders through PSHE, form time and assemblies. They must also be encouraged to report bullying when it happens to others.
- All staff must be prepared to listen sympathetically to allegations of bullying, to make notes and to pass concerns on to a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). This may involve interviews with multiple children.
- Parents must be encouraged to inform school staff (the child's form teacher or if particularly serious the Deputy Head / DSL directly) if they are concerned that their children are being bullied.
- The school has a responsibility to ensure that allegations of bullying are received sympathetically and acted upon.
- The Deputy Head must report serious or repeated incidents of bullying to the parents of those who bully.
- It is vital that the school is seen to act when bullying is reported, the aggressors are punished and victims are supported. Only if we are seen to act effectively, can the policy against bullying receive universal acceptance, support and confidence.
- A record of sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious disciplinary offences will be kept on CPOMS.
- Any incidents of concern, including poor behaviour, is recorded on CPOMS.
- Incidents of concern are discussed at the weekly pastoral team meeting and then with staff at the weekly staff meeting. Patterns of behaviour and concerns (whether they are health, pastoral or academic) are discussed. This allows a well rounded view of each child to be gained.
- Bullying logs are held via CPOMS, where incidents of alleged or proven bullying episodes are recorded.

- Some forms of bullying are against the law and should be reported to the police – assault, theft, repeated harassment and hate crimes

If an allegation is made against a member of staff, we follow the procedure as stated in our Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy (SG1).

### **Sanctions Against Bullying Behaviour**

All sanctions given to a child who is found to be intentionally bullying another child, will be imposed as per our Behaviour, Sanctions and Reward Policy (SG4). The consequences of bullying should reflect the seriousness of the incident, so that the other pupils see that bullying is unacceptable. In each of the above circumstances, the child will be fully involved in the process and will have expectations clearly explained. It is the intention that these actions will assist the child to become more aware and responsible for their actions and behaviour.

### **The Role of Staff (Teaching, Non-Teaching and Supervisors)**

- Staff must read and be familiar with all school policies, but for the purpose of preventing bullying, they must ensure they read this policy, the Safeguarding Policy (SG2) and the Behaviour Policy (SG4).
- Staff are aware that all allegations of bullying must be treated seriously and sympathetically.
- Staff will not ignore suspected bullying.
- When speaking to children, notes should be taken and the written report added to CPOMS and handed over to any senior staff who may be following up / managing the concern.
- Staff are aware of problem areas such as the toilets, changing rooms, tennis courts, astro, and 'quiet areas' and patrol these carefully.
- If a staff member suspects that a child is being bullied, they must report their concerns and escalate to the relevant member of staff e.g. Form Tutor, Head of Year or Deputy Head.
- If a cyber-bullying/bullying incident occurs out of school and is reported, staff should ensure it is investigated and acted upon.
- If threatening voicemails, texts or emails are left on a pupil's phone/ computer out of school, and are reported to a member of staff, then this must be escalated to the Deputy Head/ Designated Safeguarding Lead. This will be acted upon and if necessary the police will be called.
- If bullying is racist or involves persistent harassment or assault, it is a criminal offence and will be reported to the Headmaster immediately. This also applies to bullying which targets a pupils religion/belief or sexual orientation.
- The victim will be supported in the weeks following the reported incident, to ensure that the bullying has stopped.

### **Guidance for Staff When Speaking to Children**

- If a pupil is injured, take the pupil to the Health Hub immediately, for a review and any first aid that may be required.
- Try to ensure that there is no possibility of contact between the pupils interviewed
- Avoid making premature assumptions. It is very important not to be judgemental at this stage.
- Be non-confrontational.
- Ask the alleged bully, and the alleged victim, to write down details. They may need prompting with non-leading questions from you, to obtain the full picture.

- Collate as much information as possible. Ask additional witnesses/bystanders for information, preferably written.
- Reiterate to witnesses that there are no innocent bystanders - they are all responsible if anyone is being bullied.
- Listen carefully to all accounts - several pupils saying the same thing does not necessarily mean they are telling the truth, particularly if they have had an opportunity to discuss the incident in advance.
- Tell all pupils interviewed that they must not discuss the interview with other pupils.
- Share your report with the Head of Year and/ or Deputy Head and save your reports on CPOMS.

Once children have been spoken to, the Pastoral Team will meet, and depending on findings, it may be that the Headmaster or other members of the senior Leadership team need to be involved.

### **Guidance for Pupils**

Pupils are aware that if they believe they or someone they know is the victim of bullying (in whatever form), then they must speak to an adult as soon as possible. This person could be a parent/guardian, a Form Teacher, the Health Hub Nurse or any other member of staff.

In the case of cyberbullying in particular, pupils are made aware that they must not engage in abusive or inappropriate messages or content but report them. In addition, they are made aware through IT lessons, PHSE, Form Times and assemblies of how to keep themselves safe online. For example, not sharing personal details, not replying to abusive emails and not participating in chat in public chat rooms.

### **Guidance for Parents**

It is vital that parents and the school work together to ensure that all pupils are aware of the serious consequences of getting involved in any type of bullying.

- Parents are aware of who their child's form teacher is and how to contact them. They can also contact other members of staff directly, including senior leaders, if they have serious concerns.
- Parents are aware that all allegations of bullying will be taken seriously.
- If parents believe their child is the victim of bullying, they should contact the School without delay. In the case of cyberbullying, any evidence such as screenshots of text messages on their child's mobile phone should be brought in as evidence.
- If the incident falls during the holidays, St Neot's reserves the right to still take action against the perpetrator.
- Parents should contact the Prevent Team at their local police force if they are concerned that their child has been contacted online by extremist or terrorist groups.
- This policy is on the school's website.

### **The Role of Governors**

All governors have a copy of the Anti-Bullying Policy and this is reviewed regularly.

- Governors receive a report and regular feedback on any bullying incidents at governors' meetings and discuss the different strategies used in the school.
- Governors support all staff in implementing the policy.

### **Complaints**

We hope that you and your child do not have any complaints about the operation of our anti-bullying policy; but copies of the school's complaints procedure are available on the school website.

### **Further Information**

Further support and guidance may be obtained from the following:

- [www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)
- [www.saferinternet.org.uk](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk)
- [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)
- <https://www.childline.org.uk/>
- [www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)