

Anti-bullying Policy

Reviewer: Nick Drake

Approver: Noll Jenkins

Reviewed: April 2025

Next Review: May 2026

Last approved by Council: June 2025

Introduction:

This policy applies to all pupils at The Prep irrespective of their age and whether or not a pupil is in the care of The Prep when or if bullying behaviour occurs. This policy provides guidance for all pupils, staff and parents about recognising bullying and what to do if a bullying incident occurs.

This policy has been drawn up with assistance from the guidance issued by the DfE Preventing and Tackling Bullying (July 2017) and will be reviewed against subsequent government guidance issued from time to time.

A copy of this policy is available on The Prep's website and upon request from the Bursar's PA and should be read in conjunction with The Prep's:

- ☐ Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- ☐ Child on Child Abuse Policy
- ☐ E-Safety and ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- ☐ Behaviour Policy
- ☐ Keeping Children Safe in Education

Pupils, staff and parents should also see the supplementary advice documents and other helpful resources listed throughout this policy.

Aim:

The ultimate aim of The Prep's anti-bullying policy is to prevent bullying of any sort and to ensure that everyone can operate in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied. All members of the community, including Council, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is and be familiar with the policy on bullying. Bullying is an anti-social behaviour, which affects everyone; it is unacceptable and it will not be tolerated.

Everyone in the community has a responsibility to report any incident of bullying that comes to their attention and these reports will always be taken seriously. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will our pupils be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available at The Prep.

Definition:

Bullying may be defined as any behaviour that intentionally hurts another pupil or group physically or emotionally. It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability, or because a child is adopted or is a carer – it may occur directly or through cyber-technology (social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email).

Everyone in the community has a responsibility to report any incident of bullying that comes to their attention and these reports will always be taken seriously. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will our pupils be able

to fully benefit from the opportunities available at The Prep. Examples of unacceptable behaviour include:

- ☐ Physical (including sexual) assault. For example, hitting, kicking, spitting, removing belongings, damaging property.
- ☐ Verbal abuse, by name calling, teasing, insulting, writing notes or making offensive remarks.
- ☐ Cyber-bullying, which is defined as the use of technology by an individual or group to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behaviour intended to harm others. Examples include using social media (such as Snapchat or Instagram), mobile phones, text messaging, photographs, video, e-mail and sexting.
- ☐ Emotional bullying can also involve the manipulation of social networks. It may involve the spreading of rumours or malicious accusations with the repeated intention of insulting, excluding or marginalising individuals from their friends and normal relationships.

Protected Characteristics

Bullying may involve complicity that falls short of direct participation by, for instance, manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It may be overt and intimidatory but is often hidden and subtle. It includes actions or comments that fall under the protected characteristics (although bullying is not limited to these), pertaining to a pupil's:

- ☐ age
- ☐ sex
- ☐ race
- ☐ disability
- ☐ religion or belief
- ☐ sexual orientation
- ☐ gender reassignment

Prejudice based bullying

Prejudice based bullying is repeated hurtful behaviour that exploits or abuses someone based on their actual or supposed membership of a vulnerable group or their support for such a group. The protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010 (as set out above) are particularly relevant in this context.

Staff should therefore be vigilant around bullying that could be :

- ☐ related to race, religion, belief or culture
- ☐ homophobic, biphobic, transphobic
- ☐ sexist, sexual or which focusses on disabilities or other physical attributes.
- ☐ related to special educational needs (SEND), learning difficulties or disabilities or health conditions
- ☐ related to personal appearance or body shape;
- ☐ young carers or looked after children or adopted children or otherwise related to home circumstances.

SEND pupils

Children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain medical or physical health conditions can face additional challenges when dealing with instances of bullying. Additional barriers can exist when recognising impacts of bullying for this group of children.

These can include:

- ☐ assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration
- ☐ these children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children
- ☐ the potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs, and
- ☐ communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges.

- cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in schools or colleges or the consequences of doing so.

Any reports of bullying involving children with SEND will therefore require close liaison with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the SENCO.

The seriousness of bullying cannot be over-emphasised. Bullying is among the top concerns that parents have about their children's safety and well-being at, and on the way to and from, school. Bullying is also a top concern of children and young people themselves. Bullying makes the lives of its victims a misery: it undermines their confidence and self-esteem, and destroys their sense of security. Bullying impacts on its victims' attendance and attainment at school; marginalises those individuals or groups who may be particular targets for bullies, and can have a life-long negative impact on some young people's lives. At worst, bullying can be a factor in pupil suicide.

It is acknowledged that bullies may have complex reasons for their behaviour and may well also need help. It should also be recognised that the consequences of being allowed to 'get away with it' can be detrimental to them as well as to their victim. All pupils deserve the opportunity to be helped to understand what acceptable behaviour is. There are criminal laws that apply to harassment, assault, distribution of inappropriate images and threatening behaviour.

What to look for:

Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school.

All members of the community must be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it, in accordance with policy. Surveys have shown that in the vast majority of bullying incidents, MOST people knew that what was going on was wrong. Sometimes people, either through lethargy, peer group pressure, or tacit support for what is going on, fail to take action.

What to do:

The way to eliminate bullying is for people to be aware of the issues involved, and to be clear in their own minds what action to take should concerns arise:

If you are the victim:

If you feel able to, make it clear to the person that has upset you that you do not like what he or she is doing and ask them to stop. Do not respond physically. Bullies want to upset you; if you respond calmly, they will see little point in trying again.

Share your feelings with someone else. Ideally, talk to any member of staff or any other trusted adult with whom you feel comfortable. Posters are displayed around the school with details of the people who can help you as well as listing websites and phone numbers that may be of use. If you would rather not go straight to a member of staff, talk to your friends but don't keep the problem to yourself. They may well be able to advise on an appropriate course of action or will be able to involve other people who can. Tell your parents or another family member.

Remember that you can always use the "Just wanted you to know" pupil voice boxes around the school or use the email address safe@cheltenhamcollege.org

There are also people outside The Prep who would be willing to help:

Childline:	www.childline.org.uk	0800 1111
Kidscape:	www.kidscape.org.uk	
The Children's Commissioner:	0800 528 0731	
Safeguarding Children in Gloucestershire:	01452 426565	
Patrick Wheaton Independent Listener:	07557 105634	

The Pupil Planners also contain useful guidance on what to do if you feel you are being bullied.

If you, a pupil, witness bullying behaviour:

Act! Support the victim by offering your friendship and make it clear that in your opinion what is happening to them is wrong. Encourage them to speak out, or speak out on their behalf and tell a member of staff who can help.

Take the victim to a trusted adult as described above and reassure them that doing something will make a positive difference, or suggest that you see someone on their behalf.

If you, a member of Staff, witness an incident of bullying or it is reported to you:

Reassure and support the pupils involved. Advise them that you are required to pass details on to the relevant members of the pastoral team. This could be either their Form teacher, Section or the Head of Wellbeing depending on the gravity of the incident.

Inform the appropriate member of the pastoral team as soon as possible.

All bullying-related incidents should be written up as an 'incident' on CPOMS (Child Protection Online Management System) and passed on to the Senior Deputy Head, who will keep a central log of all complaints or incidences of confirmed bullying and record the way in which they were dealt with on CPOMS.

What will happen:

The victim will be interviewed by the appropriate member of the pastoral team and might be asked to write an immediate account of events where relevant and depending on the age and nature of the issue. The process for dealing with bullying will be explained clearly to them. The victim is also given the opportunity to discuss his /her own reactions and behaviour towards the bully. The victim is given support and advice and counselling is suggested if deemed appropriate.

Bullying Levels and Actions

Level 0 (Stage 0)	Thoughtlessness: If a pupil has made comments that are unkind and hurtful, but are considered to be clearly thoughtless the form taker or Head of Section may have a conversation with the pupil about the impact of their behaviour. They may be asked to complete a letter of apology and could be placed in detention. This conversation would be recorded by the Head of Section.
Level 1 (Stage 1)	Where there is a degree of repetition, or where thoughtless behaviour involves physicality, or if there is an imbalance of power such as where the victim is a vulnerable pupil, or where the bullying is across different year groups. At Level 1 it is likely to involve a meeting with the Head of Section and parents may be informed, depending upon circumstances. This stage may be by-passed and sanctions imposed immediately if bullying is found to be more serious.
Level 2 (Stage 2)	Warning as to future conduct: If, after the above discussion, the bullying continues, it will be assumed that it is deliberate and a more severe approach will need to be taken. If an individual incident of bullying is deemed serious enough, this may also warrant a 'level 2' intervention. Sanctions will depend on the severity of the bullying. Following a discussion between the Head of Section and the Senior Deputy Head a formal letter will be sent to parents. A meeting with parents and Senior Deputy Head may be necessary.
Level 3 (Stage 3)	If after these two steps the bullying continues, it will be assumed that the pupil has no respect for those around him / her and this will not be tolerated within the school community. In this situation a meeting between parents and the Head to discuss a pupil's position in the Prep community will be arranged. In very serious cases it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or Social Services. The school reserves the right to act to address a pupil's conduct when s/he is not on school premises or under control of a Prep member of staff. This may include contacting outside agencies.

The above levels are equally applicable for breaches of acceptable behaviour online

Reparation: This may be used in conjunction with any Level of Bullying. It offers a 'no-blame' approach to both parties. The victim(s) and their bully(ies) may have a discussion with a teacher who would normally be the Deputy

Head Pastoral. This discussion allows both parties to give their opinions and to try to work out a solution which is mutually agreeable. The aim is to allow the bullies to realise that they are causing unhappiness and that their behaviour will not be tolerated. Everything in this discussion will be recorded in writing and filed. Following this, communication will be made with parents / guardians to let them know about the situation and what has been done. This will be confidential, although tutors should be made aware and an Incident should be uploaded to CPOMS.

In all cases it is important that the “voice of the child” is heard and that their views are sought and recorded. A pupil may choose not to partake in the reparation process, for example.

Prevention:

The Prep will raise the awareness of all the staff through staff briefings and take action to reduce the risk of bullying at the times and places where it is most likely to occur.

The pupils’ version of this policy will be prominently displayed on school notice boards and will be discussed with pupils during Form teacher sessions. It will also be revisited as necessary during Thrive sessions to all years and reinforced in other areas of the curriculum as the opportunities present themselves.

Anti-bullying will feature as a discussion point for the School Council.

Anti-bullying week (November) is used to raise awareness and educate pupils. Prep School Pupil Planners also contain an Anti-Bullying statement which clarifies procedures.

The record of bullying offences is reviewed regularly by the Senior Deputy Head and the Deputy Head (Pastoral) in order to identify patterns and check that the policy is effective and introduce additional initiatives when necessary. Anti-Bullying is also a standing item on the whole school Pastoral Management Group’s (PMG) termly agenda.

One of the most effective ways to prevent bullying is to celebrate the successes of individuals in a variety of different fields.

Prevention of Cyber-bullying:

In addition to the preventative measures described above, The Prep:

- ☐ Expects all pupils to adhere to its E-Safety and ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- ☐ Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system (Smoothwall) and the Information Services Department monitors pupils’ use
- ☐ May impose sanctions for the misuse or attempted misuse of the internet or e mail
- ☐ E-safety talks are delivered on a regular basis and other suitable speakers, on a rolling programme, offering guidance on the safe use of social networking sites, including keeping personal details safe
- ☐ Cyber-bullying is covered in Thrive sessions
- ☐ Pupils are not permitted to use mobile phones in school. Day pupils using the bus to get to school or return home are allowed to have a mobile phone but this is dropped and collected from Reception every day. Full boarders have a designated iPad in Cade House in order to communicate with their parents at dedicated times through FaceTime or Teams.
- ☐ The use of cameras (including those on mobile phones) is not allowed in washing and changing areas or in the bedrooms of the Boarding House.
- ☐ Has an assigned member of the Senior Leadership Team responsible for Digital Technology (Deputy Head Academic)

The issue of Cyber-bullying is one that The Prep takes seriously, not least because when our pupils leave school they need to realise that based on the Malicious Communications Act 1988 it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known to be believed to be false by the sender.

References:

Prevention and tackling of Bullying – DfE July 2017
Cyberbullying: Advice for Headteachers and school staff 2014
Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2022
Equality Act 2010
www.cyberbullying.org