



MAGDALEN COLLEGE SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

It is a primary aim of the school that it should combine high personal and social standards and Christian values with a friendly atmosphere and mutual tolerance in which pupils of all ethnic and cultural backgrounds, of all religious persuasions and of varying levels of ability, feel welcome.

We believe that the school should be a happy and positive community characterised by an appreciation of, and respect for, the work of every member of the community.

We expect our pupils to be diligent, to be honest, to practise good manners in their relationships with one another and with teachers, and to be tolerant of one another. This follows the principles and details laid out in the school's Promoting Good Behaviour Policy. The school recognises, and promotes measures to ensure, that pupils' successes and achievements are celebrated.

This policy has regard to Department for Education guidance "Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies" (July 2017, available on DfE website), the Equality Act 2010, Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE, Sept 2023) and related law and guidance.

2. DEFINITION

Bullying is defined as "behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally".

Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has carer responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

Bullying can be a child protection issue, taking the form of peer-on-peer abuse. The response to peer-on-peer abuse procedures should be followed, as outlined in staff training and the school safeguarding policy. Reference to external agencies will be made as guided by reference to Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board's Threshold of Needs and Toolkits, as well as consultation with external agencies (for example Locality & Community Support service).

3. AIM

Magdalen College School aims to create a culture, which ensures that pupils and staff live and work in a safe environment where they are valued, respected and listened to; in this environment, children will feel confident and be able to approach adults about matters of concern to them. All teachers are given regular training to ensure that they are acquainted with the school's anti-bullying policy and procedures and are sensitive to the needs of children who are victims of bullying of some kind. This Policy is publicly available to parents and other interested parties via our website.

4. OBJECTIVES

- To ensure the protection of all our pupils from all forms of systematic unpleasantness

- To encourage open communication and good listening
- To ensure that pupils know that involvement in systematic unpleasantness, or a single act of significant unkindness, may lead to their being asked to leave the school

5. IDENTIFYING SYSTEMATIC UNPLEASANTNESS

Systematic unpleasantness:

- is sometimes engaged in as part of a group
- may be either a one-off activity or more generally persistent
- is deliberately hostile
- leads to personal distress, whether of one person or several.

It may include:

- threats of violence (both verbal and non-verbal)
- actual violence
- vandalism and/or interfering with another's property/work etc
- graffiti designed to intimidate and/or embarrass
- intimidation (including the demanding of money, material goods and/or favours)
- racially offensive remarks and/or behaviour
- sexually offensive or sexist remarks and/or behaviour
- culturally offensive remarks and/or behaviour
- religiously offensive remarks and/or behaviour
- homophobic remarks and/or behaviour
- remarks and/or behaviour which is offensive on grounds of disability or learning difficulty
- teasing, mimicking and/or name calling
- deliberately trying to turn friends against one another by spreading false rumours or ignoring/shunning
- incitement by others to commit an act of bullying
- exclusion from joining in with peer group

One of the most common forms of systematic unpleasantness among children is name-calling. Remembering the definition of bullying as “behaviour that...intentionally hurts....either physically or emotionally” can help us to distinguish between the casual, often friendly, name-calling and the sustained victimisation which is sometimes practised by a group of children on one individual.

Such systematic unpleasantness may involve the use of technologies such as social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email, and may happen either on or off-site. Tackling Bullying (2017) makes clear that school staff have the power to discipline pupils for bullying misbehaviour, which takes place outside the school premises.

6. BULLIES & VICTIMS

Systematic unpleasantness has the capacity to cause lasting and serious psychological damage to those involved; in extreme cases, it may lead to suicide. In serious cases, the school will take advice on the appropriate investigatory measures to be adopted: this may include the confiscation of mobile phones, allowing staff reasonable access to websites etc. for safeguarding purposes. Further information regarding the investigation of disciplinary matters can be found in the school's promoting good behaviour policy and discipline and exclusions policy.

These notes are not comprehensive; but it is hoped that they will give an idea of the diversity of circumstances, which may predispose young people to be involved in bullying relationships.

Young people who engage in systematic unpleasantness may:

- be excessively criticised at home
- feel undervalued
- live in a family where aggression is valued or the norm
- witness hostility within their parents' relationships
- be struggling to cope academically
- may receive systematically unpleasant behaviour themselves

Who is most likely to suffer from systematically unpleasant behaviour?

Young people who:

- are unable to manage everyday social situations with ease
- have a very distinctive appearance or stand out in some other way e.g. accent, behaviour, intellect, tastes, known or assumed sexual orientation, home background, racial background, etc.
- experience difficulties forming friendships
- are late developers/less mature, socially/physically
- are physically less strong

The school is aware that **both** those engaging in and suffering from such behaviour are in need of pastoral support and seeks to provide such help as is appropriate.

The school is aware of those who are more vulnerable to bullying as well as safeguarding concerns, as identified by Tackling Bullying (2017) and KCSIE (Sept 2023).

7. POSSIBLE SIGNS OF SYSTEMATIC UNPLEASANTNESS

Be aware of:

- Items of clothing, property, school work, etc. that are damaged or lost more often than you would consider to be normal
- Unexplained injuries to the child
- The child who becomes withdrawn and is reluctant to say why

- Educational attainment being slowly or suddenly reduced
- A reluctance to go to school. Parents may not even be aware of this as the child could be playing truant. It may only be noticed by the school through absenteeism showing up on the school attendance register
- Requests to be accompanied going to and from school, or to go by a different route. If this is longer than the previous one, it could well indicate that bullying had been occurring along the previous route
- Unusual patterns occurring with regard to money and possessions
- Money in the house or school going missing
- Depression in the child. Reluctance to eat or play normally. The youngster appears generally unhappy, moody, anxious and/or irritable
- The child who may visit the medical centre frequently and need help coping with life at school
- In extreme cases, there may be signs of suicidal feelings

Taken individually, the above may not be due to systematic unpleasantness, but a combination of even some of these signs could be a reason to suspect it.

8. COMBATING SYSTEMATIC UNPLEASANTNESS: SUPPORT STRUCTURES

Pupils who have a concern are welcome to approach any member of staff; but they will typically inform their Tutor in the first instance. Where parents have concerns, they should contact their child's Tutor (Form Teacher in the Junior School). The Tutor will, if appropriate, involve other members of staff such as Head of Year, Head of Section, Usher or Master. Should these referrals not deal fully with the concern, parents may contact the Chairman of Governors via the Clerk to the Governors, who is also the Bursar.

The particular responsibilities of staff are listed below. Information sheets summarising these support structures are posted in houserooms.

- i) **All staff** and, in particular, **House Tutors, Heads of Year, and Heads of Section** have a responsibility for nurturing a climate of mutual respect and tolerance.
- ii) **The Usher** is the Safeguarding Officer and is responsible for pastoral care in the School and is available to advise about anti-bullying and safeguarding procedures. He is responsible for the day-to-day running of the school, including the monitoring of patterns of systematically unpleasant behaviour, and he oversees the deployment of sanctions as appropriate, and works closely with the Head of the Junior School as well as Heads of Section in the Senior School.
- iii) **The Head of Junior School and Heads of Section** are the Deputy Safeguarding Officers, responsible for supporting the Usher in matters of safeguarding children and in ensuring effective pastoral care through the school.
- iv) **The Master (Miss Helen Pike)** has a Private Time from 8.20 to 8.30 am each morning when pupils may see her without appointment.
- v) **The Reverend Wealands Bell**, the School Chaplain, is available to see pupils on an individual basis to discuss any particular problems they might have and is also available in Chapel every day (except Wednesday) from 8.20 am

- vi) **The Medical Centre**, comprising 3 matrons, is available for pastoral support as well as medical care. One of the matrons is an RMN, and refers pupils to the **school counsellors**.
- vii) **The Deputy Head (Education Development)**, responsible for Liliium, is responsible for ensuring that the issue of bullying is raised and discussed at appropriate moments in children's careers at the school.
- viii) **The Master, the Usher, and Deputies** are available to advise all new teachers about anti-bullying and safeguarding procedures. Anti-bullying is part of the induction process for staff and the policy is available on the school intranet and on the school's website.
- ix) **The Director of ICT**, monitors developments in new technologies and offers expert support in cases of cyber-bullying, as well as reviewing the Computer Usage and Internet Access Policy - Pupils regularly.
- x) Lower Sixth Mentors and school prefects can play an important role in helping to look after younger pupils, providing reassurance and advice.

9. COMBATING SYSTEMATIC UNPLEASANTNESS: THE CURRICULUM

The problem of systematic unpleasantness is addressed as part of the overall Liliium programme, through religious and moral education (including morning Chapel and Tutor Time) and, where appropriate, to a particular subject in the wider curriculum e.g. drama, literature, historical events, current affairs, etc. All teachers have a responsibility to promote a safe, tolerant teaching environment.

In the course of Liliium, Theology and other lessons (as appropriate), pupils are taught:

- i. About the effects of all types of stereotyping, prejudice, systematic unkindness, racism and discrimination and how to challenge them assertively.
- ii. How to empathise with people different from themselves.
- iii. About the nature of friendship and how to make and keep friends.
- iv. The changing nature of, and pressure on, relationships with friends and family, and when and how to seek help.
- v. To recognise that goodwill is essential to positive and constructive relationships.
- vi. To negotiate within relationships, recognising that actions have consequences, and when and how to make compromises.
- vii. To resist pressure to do wrong, to recognise that actions have consequences, and when and how to make compromises.
- viii. To communicate confidently with their peers and adults.

10. COMBATING SYSTEMATIC UNPLEASANTNESS: RESPONSIBILITIES

All members of the school community have a responsibility to be vigilant for signs of systematic unpleasantness. This includes pupils. MCS understands that there may be reasons why pupils who are bystanders may be reluctant to pass on information: for example, they may consider reporting any incident to be 'grassing' on another pupil. Equally, all pupils should be aware of the role played by bystanders, and report systematic unpleasantness to any teacher, and should be reassured that every report or complaint of anti-social behaviour will be taken seriously; staff will deal with the matter correctly and responsibly; the pupil reporting or complaining will

receive support; such matters can often be dealt with on a no-names basis.

11. PROCEDURES FOR TEACHERS DEALING WITH SYSTEMATIC UNPLEASANTNESS

On witnessing or being told of an incident

- stay calm, don't make snap decisions or attach blame
- refer to 'systematic unpleasantness' and 'unkind behaviour' rather than 'the bully'
- only ever criticise behaviours, not people
- state briefly and firmly why the behaviour is unacceptable
- distance those involved
- assure all involved that the incident will be treated seriously and further action taken
- be sensitive to what the child is saying
- reassure the child that he/she is right to tell
- do not promise confidentiality
- assure the child that further action will be taken, and that you will offer support
- ensure the child's immediate safety (with a friend or another teacher) while the incident is reported and investigated

THEN

- refer the incident as soon as possible to the pupil's Tutor (Form Teacher in the Junior School) or Head of Year. The Tutor should inform the Head of Year, Head of Lower School, Head of Middle School, Head of Sixth Form, Head of Junior School or Usher, as appropriate.
- record the incident (by e-mail sent to Tutor/Head of Year/Head of Section) detailing child's name and any others involved, including witnesses, Form/Houseroom, date, time and place. Give any brief details of injuries suffered.
- record the incident and any action taken, including the notification of parents, in the pupil's file so that patterns can be identified over time.

A central record is kept by the Usher's Office and is scrutinised by the Usher. A bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

12. INVESTIGATIONS, MONITORING AND DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES

Reports of systematic unkindness are investigated with due seriousness by the relevant staff (Tutor, Head of Year, Head of Section, or Usher as appropriate). Statements from those involved are taken as required and parents informed of the investigation when it is practicable and appropriate to do so. Records of all sanctions given and their causes are scrutinised to detect patterns of unpleasant behaviour over time.

Disciplinary consequences depend on the nature of the allegation(s) and the degree to which the Master, Usher or appropriate member of staff feel the allegation(s) are upheld. If deliberate unkindness is established, the school will consider all sanctions set out in its Promoting Good Behaviour Policy, as well as following the Pastoral and Safeguarding Policies where necessary to

offer pastoral support to those suffering and/or engaging in systematically unpleasant behaviour. Where appropriate, a pupil's special educational needs and/or, disability will be taken into account as well as the needs of vulnerable pupils. In minor cases, a quiet word may be sufficient; at the other end of the spectrum, a pupil who is systematically unpleasant, or who commits a serious act of unpleasantness, may lose his/her place at the school. There may be criminal consequences of bullying where it amounts to harassment or threatening or malicious behaviour.

In other instances, responses may include a Master's detention (detention with the HoJS in the Junior School), the involvement of parents and Tutor, referral to the medical centre or the counsellor, or suspension, or any combination of these. In any case, the school's view is that a pupil who persistently makes life unhappy for others, especially after a warning, should not expect to retain his/her place at the school.

Related policies

- Promoting Good Behaviour
- Safeguarding policy
- Liliun schemes of work
- Learning Support policy
- Computer Usage and Internet Access Policy - Pupils

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By	Usher
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