

ST COLUMBA'S CATHOLIC BOYS' SCHOOL

GOVERNORS' POLICY STATEMENT



Anti-Bullying Policy

Head Teacher: Mr N Fisher
School Lead: Mr B Woodcock
Chair of Governors: Mrs J Johnson

Originator Date	February 2019
Review Date (Three Yearly)	Spring 2022

Our Vision

Our school is an inclusive place of learning that celebrates and welcomes diversity. Every member of our community is a unique and special creation of God and is known, cared for and valued for the contribution they make. Every student is challenged and supported to achieve his best.

The students, staff, governors and parents of St Columba's reject bullying in all its forms.

"Every child should be able to learn in a school environment free from bullying of any kind and in which they feel safe and supported. There is no place for bullying in our schools and communities and each of us involved in education has a role in creating a culture in schools where bullying is not tolerated. No child deserves to suffer the pain and indignity that bullying can cause. We recognise the negative impact it has on the educational experiences and wider development of so many of our children and young people."

Ed Balls MP, Ministerial forward in *Safe to Learn* (2007)

Educate Against Hate

The students, staff, Governors and parents of St Columba's fully support these statements:

- **Our school is a place that inspires and engages young minds.**
- **Our school believes in democracy and the laws of the country, where every individual has a voice that is heard and respected, no matter what their faith or belief.**
- **Our school values discussion, debate, and learning from others.**
- **Our school believes that division belongs in mathematics, not the classroom.**
- **There is no place for extremism in our school.**

St Columba's Catholic Boys' School is committed to ensuring that our students feel safe and stay safe. We also feel that all adults should feel safe and not be subject to any form of bullying. Our aim is that all students and staff who attend our school can live, learn, work and socialise, confident that they will:

- Not be bullied, discriminated against, harassed or otherwise abused;
- Know what to do if such a problem arises and how to minimise the likelihood of being bullied, harassed or otherwise abused; and
- Know that it is never acceptable to participate in bullying, discriminatory behaviour or harassment of any kind.

Aims and Objectives of Our Anti-Bullying Policy

This section explains how we will know if our policy is successful. We aim:

- To reduce the number of bullying, discriminatory, harassment related incidents;
- To reduce the impact of bullying and increase confidence in addressing and reporting incidents;
- To establish a culture where bullying in all its forms, discrimination and harassment, is unacceptable and have an agreed strategy in dealing with such incidents is applied equally by all who work with children and young people;
- To promote through our curriculum and role model behaviours, a positive and safe environment that nurtures emotional health, good behaviour and well-being of all students and staff. A commitment to promoting equality underpins this;
- To provide information and guidance to students and their parents on how and where to get help;

- To involve students, parents, staff and governors in the development of our Anti-Bullying Policy and strategy;
- To establish an Anti-Bullying Working Party that reviews our policy and strategy every two years; and
- This Anti-Bullying Policy and Strategy complements the policy, practice, ethos and work of our policies on Equal Opportunities, Safeguarding Children and Adults, Prevent, Behaviour for Learning, Teaching and Learning and Citizenship. It is therefore pivotal to the strand of our School Improvement Plan in ensuring students feel safe in school and are safe in school. We have adapted our policy to include statutory recommendations from Keeping Children Safe In Education (Sept 2018) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018) and the Prevent Duty (July 2015).

What is Bullying/Peer to Peer Abuse?

Bullying is any persistent behaviour which is deliberately intended to hurt, intimidate, frighten, harm or exclude. Bullying can be racist, sexist or homophobic. People can be bullied for any reason, including the way they look, their religion, their age, because of a learning or physical disability, where they live, their financial circumstances, their family background and even how well they are doing at school.

There are three significant factors that distinguish bullying from other types of aggressive or threatening behaviour:-

- A power imbalance;
- A victim who cannot match that power; and
- Aggressive action is repeated over a period of time.

What are the different types of bullying? (Please refer to Appendix 1)

Bullying/Peer to Peer abuse can take many forms:

- **Emotional / mental:** this includes being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, possessions, threatening gestures);
- **Physical:** this includes pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence, demanding money, harming in any way;
- **Verbal:** name-calling, sarcasm, teasing, spreading rumours;
- **Racist:** racial taunts, racial graffiti, gestures – derogatory to skin colour, background or religion;
- **Sexual:** unwanted physical (sexual) contact or sexually abusive comments. This could also include coercion to become involved in or witness sexual acts that are both inappropriate and illegal in order to remain within a friendship or social group;
- **Homophobic:** teasing people for being gay or being perceived as gay (calling them gay names, even in jest), spreading rumours about people's sexual orientation for the purpose of making fun of them, hitting, intimidation and isolating people who are believed to be gay;
- **Religious:** making fun or being aggressive about a person based on prejudiced views about their religion and culture. This would include but not be restricted to anti- Semitism and Islamophobia;
- **Cyber:** any form of nastiness, threatening or intimidating behaviour by text, MSN, email or 'chat rooms'. This includes making malicious telephone calls, sending malicious letters, emails, text messages, taking inappropriate photos or photos without permission of subject, using mobile telephones or on-line;
- **Disabilist:** children and young people with a disability can be bullied wherever they go, including at school or traveling to and from school. They are more likely to be bullied by other children because they are seen as 'different' and 'easy' targets by bullies; and
- **Geographic:** this is where children are made to feel bad because of the area they live because it is a reflection on their self-worth

It is not bullying when Students find themselves in conflict. Examples of this could be –

- Disagreeing;
- Name-calling between two friends (accepted by both parties);

- Playfighting; or
- Having an argument or even fighting (where there is no imbalance of power or intimidation).

Bullying – Why People Bully Abuse Others

- Sometimes it is jealousy of a student, his friends, his belongings or his achievements;
- Maybe it makes them feel more powerful and popular;
- It could be that they themselves have been bullied and bully others to protect themselves;
- They may be sad and unhappy themselves and take out their frustrations on others; or
- They may not actually realize what they are doing and the harm it is causing others.

Bullying – Why Do Bullies Abusers Pick On Certain People

- They may appear anxious, lack confidence and are sensitive or quiet;
- They may react to bullying by crying or withdrawing;
- They appear more able in school or other areas than the bully;
- They are envious of the other person; or
- They think the other person will not tell anyone.

Possible Signs of Being a Victim of peer on Peer Abuse

Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour such as becoming shy and nervous. They may feign illness, cling to adults, lack concentration, develop negative attitudes to work and become school refusers.

Encouragement to Tell

“Surveys of students suggest that the most important response to bullying is that it is taken seriously. Above all, they want to be believed and to believe that by telling, they will make things better.” It is important that we create an atmosphere where the students who are being bullied or others who know about it, feel that they will be listened to and believed and that action will be swift but sensitive to their concerns.

How We Encourage Students to Tell

We encourage students to report bullying in confidence using a variety of methods. However, in keeping with our Safeguarding Policy, if a student’s welfare or safety is at risk, then the information cannot be kept confidential.

We encourage students/parents to tell in the following ways:-

- Worry Boxes placed strategically around the school. These are emptied regularly and acted upon by SLT/Head of Year;
- Staff available and accessible at key times in the school day;
- Peer mentors;
- Playground buddies available at known times of the day;
- Encourage parents to report by ensuring;
- Those receiving messages or visitors are aware of what the systems are and what steps to take;
 - At the point of contact, the issue is dealt with sensitively with the emotional needs of the parent and child considered;
 - The concern is taken seriously and acted upon promptly within an agreed time-scale and feedback given;
 - There is a clear route for further action;
- Use of email systems. Students have been informed of the reportit@st-columbas.bexley.sch.uk email address;
- Use of the SHARP system on the school website; and
- Staff who feel they are being bullied are also encouraged to tell.

How We Work to Prevent Bullying Occurring

Prevention is the key to an effective approach to combating bullying and discriminatory behaviour. We recognize the value of pro-active and preventative measures to create an atmosphere of mutual respect, understanding and tolerance that will reduce the likelihood of bullying.

Embedding the basic principle of our Christian ethos that states that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect is central to our strategy for preventing bullying and complements our policy on Equal Opportunities and Safeguarding Children.

The measures we undertake to prevent bullying in our school include:

- Having a dedicated member of Senior Leadership Team who leads on Anti-Bullying;
- To develop in partnership with students the Anti-Bullying Charter which will be displayed around the school and sets clear expectations for all with regard to bullying and anti-discriminatory behaviour;
- Outside speaker presentations on dangers of Extremism;
- Dedicated Educate Against Hate assemblies which have focused on LGBTQ, Islamophobia and race hate;
- Working with the Anti-Bullying Alliance, BeatBullying to access information, attend workshops and help resource Anti-Bullying projects, such as Anti-Bullying Assemblies which always support Anti Bullying Week and are revisited later in the year;
- Provide curricular opportunities especially in RE, History, Geography, English and Drama to raise student awareness of bullying behaviours and management strategies;
- Small group work with specific children who have been involved as a victim or as a perpetrator, to promote self-esteem and resilience;
- Peer support including peer mentoring, playground buddies and 'listening ear';
- Lunch and break times or any other time in the school day, being supervised by teaching staff who know students including the Senior Leadership Team. This also includes the provision of school-based diversionary activities after school and at lunch times. Year 7 students have their own playground supervised by a team of teachers led by the Head of Year;
- Performing Arts opportunities which allow students to explore issues and work co-operatively through role play. Students from Year 9 performed in Anti-Bullying Week Assemblies;
- Hold parent/teacher workshops for tackling cyberbullying;
- Use tutor time to allow students and staff to explore issues and responses to issues of cyberbullying and bullying; and
- Make a clear expectation of staff of their responsibility to act as positive role models, ensuring their actions never exacerbate bullying and that they challenge any language or actions considered discriminatory

Student Participation and Student Voice

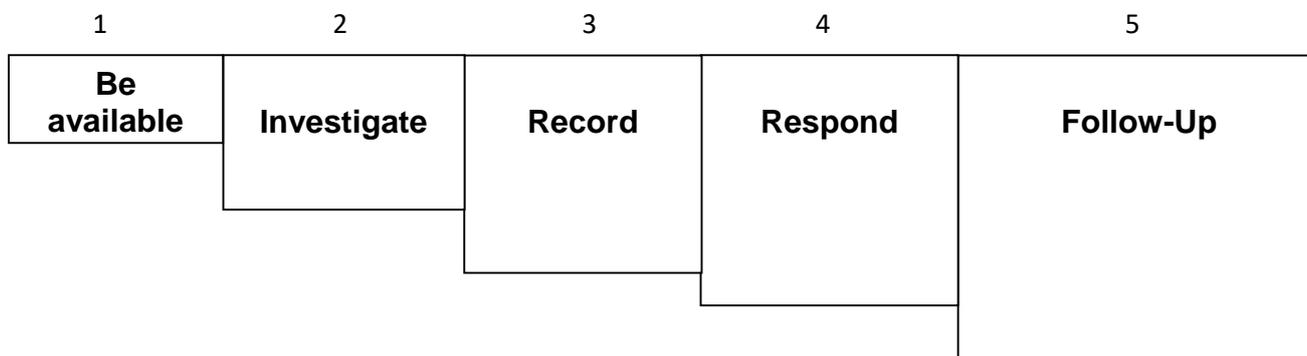
The involvement and participation of students is central to the effectiveness of this strategy. This we have sought to do by:-

- Student Surveys – To help us produce high quality information of the extent, perception and nature of bullying in our school (see Appendix 2). This includes online surveys as part of Safer Internet Day;
- Student Council – Ensure students' views are sought through bringing together children of different ages, backgrounds and levels of vulnerability. Students review policy for fitness for purpose;
- Students' Anti-Bullying Charter – The Students Charter that clearly states in language accessible to children the expectations of students and adults as to how we should treat each other. (See Appendix 4); and
- Student Activities – Students to be involved in the presentation and production of activities, resources and materials to support anti-bullying work in the school.

How We Deal With Incidents of Bullying and Discriminatory Behaviour – A Stepped Approach

This guidance follows the framework recommended for all organisations and agencies working with children and young people across the Borough of Bexley (Strategy for Combating Bullying and Related Discriminatory Behaviours in School and Non-School Settings – BLSCB August 2009).

A Model of Intervention – The five-step approach to incident management provides a sound process with which to deal with specific issues and build confidence in our commitment to tackling bullying.
 The Five Step Approach – The five-step approach to incident management provides a sound general process, whenever and wherever incidents occur. 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. Make sure students have trust in the culture of telling. This means that they will be listened to and taken seriously. Students need to know there is an adult who they can confide in.
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 organisation’s anti-bullying policy. All parties should be encouraged to record the incident in writing. Written records of the incident and dates of follow up conversations should be recorded. Incidents of bullying should be recorded using the school’s Behaviour Watch system and the school’s bullying incident report form. (see Appendix 2)
4.	Respond	Have a pre-agreed procedure for responding. The style should be non-judgmental and relate to the severity of the incident. Remind students of the policy in recording and dealing with incidents of bullying. This means that bullies will be held to account for their actions and will be punished with a sanction that is recorded. There will be a range of sanctions depending on the nature of the individual incident and whether there have been previous incidents by a particular perpetrator. (See below: the Five Step approach to respond)
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 students that we mean business, by properly investigating and sanctioning anyone who bullies others. Parents of the students involved will always be contacted. This will encourage positive behaviour from those involved in bullying others and promoting the values of our Anti Bullying Strategy by delivering on its promises. The use of restorative justice is important in the process of drawing a line under specific incidents and building the confidence of the victim as well as highlighting unacceptable behaviour by children who bully.

Implications for Managing the Five Steps

- **Be available** – the need for swift and effective action may conflict with other demands such as teacher time; it is preferable for the staff member or volunteer who receives the initial report to

pursue the initial investigation – although because we regard bullying as a serious contravention of school rules other pastoral staff are likely to be involved;

- **Investigate** – it is a time consuming process, particularly if a group of children and young people or bystanders is involved; notes should be taken to aid accuracy of reporting; a quiet secure location is required for interview; interviews require an objective approach to ensure fairness;
- **Record** – ensure teacher availability of report sheets and have an agreed system for collating / centralising reports
- **Respond** – ensure teacher response provides models of behaviour and avoids any aggressive reaction; the way adults respond is important and should reject fully the use of ‘power to inflict hurt or discomfort to another person. (Children and young people may be identified as having long-term needs requiring a positive intervention programme); and
- **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 students.

The tiered system of response is suggested to give teachers and pastoral leaders the scope to manage the range of bullying incidents which may occur, from the least severe isolated occasion to the severe and persistent cases. Sanctions may range from the withdrawal of privileges or detentions, to fixed term or even permanent exclusions, depending on the severity and / or persistence of the incidents. Please refer to Behaviour for Learning Policy.

APPENDIX 1 – Types of Bullying Behaviours

Behaviour	Personal Aspects	Social Aspects	Criminal
<p>Verbal Bullying that is deliberately intended to hurt, intimidate, frighten, harm or exclude</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name-calling, belittling comments, jokes or verbal attacks based on appearance, disability, home situation, race, culture, income, class, sexuality, faith, religion, family Nasty teasing Hurting a person's feelings sexual harassment Making personal threats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alienating a person from their friends and social group Damaging a reputation Excluding and not including in small or larger group activities Ostracising Malicious gossiping, spreading rumours Using sexually abusive or suggestive language to exclude a person or group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coercing people or daring them to do illegal acts Inciting others to do dangerous things Inciting hatred towards an individual or group Faith, disablist, homophobic, transphobic, religious, racist or sexist Intimidating telephone calls Sexual harassment Threats about damaging a person, their family, friends or property, including inflicting physical harm, taunting Faith, racist, homophobic, sexist, disablist, religious
<p>Non-Verbal Bullying that is deliberately intended to hurt, intimidate, harm, exclude or frighten</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intimidation through gesture Hiding, stealing or damaging a person's books or belongings Dirty looks Sending written threats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting someone up to take the blame publicly Shunning someone not speaking with or interacting with them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theft stalking
<p>Physical Bullying A direct physical attack on a person An indirect attack on property or belongings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beating Biting Choking Kicking Punching Shaking Slapping Tripping Spitting Hitting Poking Throwing Shoving Urinating Groping or unwanted touching ignoring 	<p>Social aspects of physical bullying include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> embarrassment and public humiliation group bullying – when a child or young person is outnumbered or picked on in some of the following ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> blocking the way demanding money being forced to participate in embarrassing initiation rites being forced to do unwanted things in front of others having belongings destroyed, stolen and / or ridiculed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extortion with threats Physical assault Sexual abuse Sexual violence Stealing Threatening with a weapon 'happy slapping' Using a weapon to inflict harm (assault)

<p>Technological Bullying The majority of verbal and non-verbal behaviours can be carried out using new forms of technology – therefore technological bullying takes the same form as non-physical victimization, but without the bully having to confront the victim face-to-face. It is often carried out anonymously.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sending threatening or intimidating comments via text messages • internet forums • Making malicious or prank phone calls • Instant messaging • Internet chat rooms • Personal websites • Creating web pages which aim to intimidate psychologically and/or physically threaten, or socially damage an individual or group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking embarrassing or humiliating pictures or video clips on mobile phones which may also be sent or shared with others • Setting up or contributing to online forums or websites, where users post malicious comments about a person or group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using any of these technological methods to threaten, intimidate or harass an individual or group
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APPENDIX 2 – Bullying Report Form

	Victim A	Victim B	Alleged perpetrator C	Alleged perpetrator D
Name				

	Victim A	Victim B	Alleged perpetrator C	Alleged perpetrator D
Year				
Ethnicity				
Previous	Yes / No / Unknown	Yes / No / Unknown	Yes / No / Unknown	Yes / No / Unknown
Date of incident	Reported by		Report sent to admin on	
Date reported	Reported to			

WHERE INCIDENT OCCURRED			
1. Inside school /classroom	2. Immediately outside school	3. Travelling to/from school	
4. Outside on playground/sports field	5. Away from school e.g. school trip	6. Other (specify)	
TYPE OF INCIDENT			
Verbal abuse <input type="checkbox"/>	Avoidance <input type="checkbox"/>	Discrimination <input type="checkbox"/>	Physical Violence <input type="checkbox"/> Group Intimidation <input type="checkbox"/>
Brief description of incident			

ACTION TAKEN indicate Y – Yes or NR - Not required

A. Victim(s) Support place the initials of the member of staff taking the action inside the boxes		
Confirming the school's firm policy towards such behaviour		Yes / NR
Affirm victim(s) self-worth, their culture, religion, ethnicity		Yes / NR
Inform or arrange meeting with the parent/carer immediately, by letter or by phone		Yes / NR
Provided or referred for counselling		Yes / NR
Other support (please state)		

B. Dealing with the perpetrator(s)		
Explained firmly the wrong done, in line with the disciplinary code		Yes / NR
Informed or arranged meeting with parent/guardian as appropriate		Yes / NR
Sent perpetrator(s) to the appropriate senior member of staff to record the incident		Yes / NR
Used the disciplinary procedures		Yes / NR
Used exclusion procedures		Yes / NR
Provided or referred for counselling		Yes / NR
Limited action taken due to inconclusive evidence		Yes / NR
Involvement of safer schools community police officer		Yes / NR

C. School / institution response		
Thorough investigation of reported incident		Yes / NR
Reported the matter to the Head of Year, Deputy Head		Yes / NR
Report to Governors		Yes / NR
Immediate report to Local Authority. Reported to:		Yes / NR
Report to other agencies such as police (if so, crime number)		Yes / NR
Sent a letter to all parents/guardians explaining the matter		Yes / NR
Other institutional response		Yes / NR
Has this incident been resolved to the satisfaction of all?		Yes / NR
Signature of designated person		

APPENDIX 3 – Bullying Survey

Please take the time to answer these questions as carefully and honestly as you can. Bullying is an important issue. We all have the right to feel safe at school. Answering the questions in this survey helps us to plan our services as best we can to ensure everyone comes to school to learn. Thank you.

1 Which of the following incidents would you think of as bullying?	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Unsure</i>
Name calling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical abuse, e.g. kicking, hitting, punching etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Picking on people all of the time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Falling out with friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hurting people's feelings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teasing and laughing at people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Racism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Homophobia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leaving people out	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spreading rumours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making threats	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nasty text messaging	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Do you think all children get bullied at some time?	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Unsure</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3 Do you think all children bully at times? *Yes* *No* *Unsure*

4 Do you think bullying goes on in your school? *Yes* *No* *Unsure*

5 Have you ever been bullied at school or on your way to and from school?

Yes *No* *Unsure*

If yes, how were you bullied?

6 What would you do if you were be *bullied*? *Talk to Someone* *Keep it to yourself* *Stay away*

7 How easy is it to talk to a member of staff if you feel you are being bullied?

Very easy *Quite easy* *Not very easy* *Not at all easy*

8 If you have been bullied did you tell anyone about it? *Yes* *No* *Unsure*

9

If you did tell someone, who did you tell?

Friend

*A member of
School staff*

Parent / Carer

Other

10

If you did tell someone, did this lead to the bullying being stopped?

Yes

No

Unsure

11

If you didn't tell anyone about being bullied, was this because (*tick as many as you need to*)

You were afraid of the bullies

You thought nobody would listen

You thought you could deal with it yourself

What was that reason?

12

Whereabouts in the school do you feel you are most likely to be bullied?

13

Whereabouts in the school do you feel you are safe and are least likely to be bullied?

APPENDIX 4 – Anti-Bullying Charter

We want our school to be free from bullying

Every single student at St Columba's has the right to be safe and happy at school. They have the right to enjoy their learning and leisure time free from intimidation, both in the school and outside.

1	We will not tolerate unkind actions or remarks – even if these were not intended to hurt. There should be no action that could damage a student's self-esteem.
2	There should be no physical abuse.
3	There should be no name calling.
4	There should be no ganging up on people.
5	There should be no exclusion of a person from any group.
6	When somebody does something wrong they should not be laughed at.
7	Everyone should feel respected. We share the responsibility to ensure that bullying is not tolerated.
8	Students should support each other by reporting all instances of bullying, and those dealing with the report will take appropriate action.
9	Bullying will be dealt with seriously.
10	We are a 'telling school', bullying is too important not to be reported.
11	Vandalism of personal property cannot be tolerated and personal property should not be borrowed without the owner's free consent.
12	There should be no intimidation of younger students by older students.
13	There should be acceptance of each other's differences, whether how a person behaves (extra hard worker, etc) or how they appear (physical characteristics, etc).

Appendix 5 – DCSF and Healthy Schools Guidance

Over the last two years the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and Healthy Schools have revised their guidance on Anti-Bullying. The documents referred to in this short summary are:

1. DCSF Safe to Learn: An overview of Anti-Bullying including four specific areas:
 - Cyber Bullying
 - Homophobic Bullying
 - Bullying around Racism, Religion and Culture
 - Bullying Involving Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

This guidance was first published in 2007 and acts as an overview to Anti-Bullying. It sets out what the law says Children’s Service’s Authorities and schools should do about bullying, in order to promote the well-being of young people and ensure they stay safe.

This guidance covers both how schools should tackle bullying in general and how schools can respond to the different kinds of bullying, such as cyber bullying, homophobic bullying and racist bullying.

2. Healthy Schools: Anti-Bullying Guidance for Schools Supplement (2008) to Guidance for schools on Developing Emotional Health and Wellbeing (2007). The executive summary of this guidance states “The National Healthy Schools Programme (NHSP), a joint Department of Health (DH) and Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) programme, has worked with 11 Million, The Office of the Children’s Commissioner for England and The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) to produce this guidance”. It includes both details of a literature review and examples of good practice.

3. Cyber Bullying - Ref: DCSF-00658-2007

This guidance was developed for the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) by Childnet International and in consultation with the DCSF Cyber Bullying Taskforce, which included representatives from organizations as diverse as Bebo, O2, Kidscape and the Carphone Warehouse.

In fact, some cyber bullying activities could be criminal offences under a range of different laws, including the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 which has both criminal and civil provision, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 and the Public Order Act 1986. The age of criminal responsibility in the UK starts at ten.

4. Homophobic Bullying - Ref: 00668-2007BKT-EN

This guidance was written for the DCSF by Stonewall and Educational Action Challenging Homophobia (EACH) and was created with the help of children and young people, Heads and school staff, in secondary school, where homophobic language can be more extensive. For example, homophobic language can be used:

- To describe an inanimate object or item that is thought to be inferior or laughable – “that pencil case is so gay”
- To bully someone who has gay parents or other family members who are gay
- To suggest that a person is inferior or laughable or in some way not behaving as they should do – “why do you want to play basketball? Are you a gay?”
- To suggest that an action or response is felt to be inappropriate – “I’m not doing the play if I have to hug him, that’s gay”
- To intimidate someone or make them feel uncomfortable – “Miss, are you a lesbian?”
- To undermine and bully someone by suggesting that they are gay, including spreading rumours and malicious gossip
- To verbally bully someone who is gay, or who is thought to be gay

5. Bullying around Racism, Religion and Culture - Ref: 0000-2006DOC-XX

This guidance predates the other documents by a year and is much longer; having sections on training and a “developing” section which refers to 100 websites. The foreword stresses the seriousness of racist bullying:

“We also know that racist bullying is an aspect of bullying that schools find particularly challenging, as Ofsted and schools themselves tell us. The law recognizes the seriousness of abuse and attacks that are motivated by racism. Schools, like all public bodies, have a duty at law to promote race equality. Creating an ethos where racist bullying rarely happens, and is dealt with convincingly when it does, is one way in which schools fulfil that duty, and one aspect of the school’s race equality policy.”

The guidance provides many examples of young people’s experiences and also discusses the definition of racist bullying, providing specific instances based on real events that help to expand understanding of this are:

“A Sikh boy at a primary school who wears his hair in a knot covered by a handkerchief (a patika) is teased by other students because, they say, he looks like a girl. His distress is compounded when a teacher assumes he is a girl and tries to separate him from other boys when changing for PE.”

6. Bullying Involving Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities - Ref: DCSF-00372-2008 (DCFS)

This guidance is in five sections:

1. Introduction – this gives a definition of bullying adding this section
2. Legal duties on those involved in schools from governors to support staff
3. Prevention – looking at policy, culture and rewarding positive behaviour
4. Responding to bullying – sanctions and actions after bullying has happened
5. Resources and websites – signalling from where schools may receive help