

# The Catholic High School, Chester

## Harmful Behaviours & Anti-Bullying Policy

So, in everything,  
do to others what you would have them do to you

Matthew 7:12

Administration	
Statutory / Non-Statutory	Statutory
Website	Yes
Document formulated	June 2025
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## Introduction

As a Catholic school we are guided by the teaching of Jesus Christ. We recognise that at times we all fail to behave in a way that reflects the commandment to love God and love our neighbour. Jesus also taught about the need for forgiveness and giving people the opportunity to change.

## Aims

We aim for all our students to develop academically, spiritually, and socially to become successful, happy and caring citizens. We pride ourselves on providing a nurturing, supportive and caring ethos in which positive relationships are fostered between all members of our school community.

Our key aims are as follows;

## Achievement

- Students work rigorously in the pursuit of excellence

## Readiness

- Students have positive routines and good habits to enable them to engage with their learning effectively and prepare them for the next stage in their lives

## Community

- Students personify the values needed to positively contribute to their communities

## Health

- Students demonstrate the knowledge and skills needed to have healthy bodies, healthy minds, and healthy relationships

## ARCH in action

# Achievement

*Remember, you will always reap what you sow. So don't get tired of doing what is good. Don't get discouraged and give up for we will reap a harvest of blessing – Galatians 6:7–9*

- Live out Christofidelis
- Excellent attitude to learning
- Resilience in learning
- Seeking excellence in all areas of study
- Commitment to extracurricular opportunities
- School representation
- Community representation

# Readiness

*Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it – Proverbs 22:6*

- Contribute to our school ethos
- Excellent attendance
- Excellent punctuality
- Excellent standards of personal presentation (uniform)
- Always being prepared for learning (equipment, kit, school books, homework)

# Community

*Love one another. As I have loved you, you should love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples – John 13:34-35*

- Follow the Catholic Social Teachings and Gospel Values
- Respectful behaviour towards others at all times
- Empathetic and kind
- Tolerance of other views and beliefs
- We keep ourselves and others safe
- Acceptance of others right to learning
- Respectful of school property and the property of others

# Health

*May the God who gives us peace make you holy in every way and keep your whole being – spirit, soul and body – free from every fault at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ – Thessalonians 5:23*

- Nurture spiritual growth at every opportunity
- Connect positively with others
- Give to others
- Learn new skills
- Be physically active
- Understand how outside factors (social media or screen use) can affect a Healthy Mind

## Policy Statement

At The Catholic High School, Chester, we are committed to fostering a school community where every student is known, valued, and supported — a place where kindness, dignity, and respect shape every relationship. Our anti-bullying policy is rooted in our mission to nurture each student academically, spiritually, and socially, and is guided by our core ARCH principles: Achievement, Readiness, Community, and Health.

*“The school, in living out its Christ-centred mission, successfully creates a welcoming and highly inclusive community in which each individual pupil is known and loved.”*

(Catholic Schools Inspectorate Report 2024)

We believe that every person is made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27) and has an inherent dignity that must be honoured and protected. As Jesus taught:

“Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” — John 13:34

This call to love, respect, and care for each other is central to our understanding of how we live and learn together.

Our ARCH values in action against bullying:

- **Achievement** reminds us that all students should feel safe and supported so they can strive for excellence without fear of mistreatment or exclusion.
- **Readiness** calls us to foster positive routines and emotional resilience, enabling students to respond to challenges in healthy, constructive ways.
- **Community** compels us to act with empathy and compassion, actively promoting inclusion, respect, and the courage to stand up for others.
- **Health** encourages the development of healthy minds and relationships, where harmful behaviour is recognised, challenged, and addressed appropriately.

Bullying and harmful behaviours undermine these values and disrupt the positive environment we are called to build. This policy sets out how we define, prevent, respond to, and educate around all forms of bullying and unkindness, so that every member of our school family can flourish. Working together — staff, students, parents, and carers — we aim to create a school where no one suffers in silence, everyone takes responsibility, and all are supported to grow into successful, happy, and caring citizens.

## Aims of this policy

- Provide clarity around the language and terms used in relation to incidents that cause upset, distress, or harm
- Clarify how students and staff should respond and report such incidents
- Define the roles individuals may play in these incidents
- Outline the stages of school response when managing such incidents

## Definitions

### The ways upset, distress and harm can be caused;

#### When banter stops being banter

The use of the term 'banter' is debated. While it can describe playful interaction, it is often misused to justify hurtful or offensive remarks.

- Banter is playful, positive, and reciprocal: Banter between friends involves mutual participation and understanding. If the person on the receiving end of the banter is hurt, it is no longer banter but potentially an act of unkindness or harmful behaviour. Mistakes should be corrected quickly and students should feel able to speak up when a joke has gone too far. Banter is unlikely to occur with people outside of your close friendships.

#### Act of unkindness

- An act of unkindness is when an individual causes another individual unintentional upset and distress. This may have been caused by not treating someone else respectfully or by failing to consider their feelings. It may also occur between friendships due to over familiarity or unnecessary roughness. While this action will have caused upset and distress, this was not intentional and not the motivation of the actions.

#### Harmful Behaviour

- Harmful behaviour is when an individual causes another individual intentional physical or emotional harm. This may have been caused by physical violence, verbal abuse or harassment and can be conducted in person or online. An action will be considered harmful behaviour when it is carried out with the intention to cause harm.

#### Bullying

- Bullying is the repetition of harmful behaviours over time involving an imbalance of power. The five key elements of bullying are;
  - Hurtful
  - Intentional
  - Repeated
  - Power imbalance
  - Unreciprocated

## Harmful behaviours

These can be;

- Physical - kicking, hitting, taking and damaging belongings.
- Verbal - name calling, taunting, threats, offensive/personal remarks.
- Relational - spreading nasty stories, gossiping, excluding from social groups
- Cyber - e-mails, picture/video clip bullying, instant/direct messaging
- Indirect - graffiti, defacing of property, the displaying or sharing of pornography, discrimination based on disability (disablist), homophobic, transphobic, racist or sexist material.

Serious, unprovoked or repeated harmful behaviour—particularly involving protected characteristics—will be escalated to senior leadership, may result in exclusion, and may be reported to the police.

## Bullying is a group behaviour

Research shows that there are several roles that individuals play in bullying incidents;

### Victims

- Target - The person or group at whom the bullying is aimed.

### Offenders

- Ringleader - Initiating and leading the bullying but not always the person 'doing' the bullying.
- Assistant - Actively involved in 'doing' the bullying but not leading it
- Reinforcer - Supports the bullying and might laugh or encourage other people to 'collude', may record incident using their phone.

### Enablers

- Outsider/Bystander - Ignores any bullying and doesn't want to get involved. Turns a blind eye, which enables the harmful behaviour to continue.

### Preventers

- Defender - Stands up for someone being bullied. Knows bullying is wrong and feels confident enough to do something about it. This might involve removing a victim from a situation or reporting an incident to an adult immediately.

## The ways in which a victim may react

### Appropriate reactions

#### Report

- Speak to an adult immediately in order to prevent further upset, distress or harm

#### Self defence

- Actions taken during an incident to prevent you coming to further harm. This does not include intentionally causing harm in response. Whenever possible victims should make an effort to leave the area and seek help.

### Inappropriate reactions

#### Retaliation

- Actions taken during or after an incident to mirror the harm caused. This is not acceptable, makes dealing with incidents difficult and may result in school sanctions.

#### Retribution

- Actions taken during or after an incident in order to cause harm to gain revenge for an act of unkindness or harmful behaviour. This is not acceptable and will lead to school sanctions.

## Understanding Bullying: Why It Happens

Why students may be bullied:

Bullying often arises from perceived differences. A student may be targeted because of:

- Appearance, race, faith, disability, gender identity or sexuality
- Academic ability or special educational needs
- Social background or family situation
- Interests, hobbies, or the way they speak
- Jealousy or peer group dynamics

Why students bully:

Students may engage in bullying because:

- They are seeking attention or approval
- They are copying behaviour they've seen elsewhere
- They have been victims of bullying or trauma themselves
- They are under peer pressure or fear rejection
- They feel insecure and seek control over others

Understanding these reasons can help us better educate and support all students, addressing root causes as well as the behaviour itself.

## Reporting

Any incident of harmful behaviour is always taken seriously at The Catholic High School, Chester — whether it is verbal, physical, or online. Incidents often happen outside of school which means we may not always be aware that it has taken place, so we ask parents and carers to remain vigilant and to share any concerns with us as soon as they arise to prevent incidents happening in school.

All reported incidents will be investigated thoroughly and dealt with firmly. Where necessary, parents and carers of those involved will be contacted as a matter of course. All acts of unkindness and harmful behaviours should be reported immediately. This can be done by anyone. You do not need to be directly involved or have witnessed the behaviours to report them. They can be reported in the following ways;

- Speaking or emailing any member of staff that they feel comfortable with. This might be their Form Tutor, Subject Teacher, AYLL, YLL, Chaplain or SLT.
- To parents or other trusted adults who can then inform school by contacting the relevant YLL.
- To a trusted friend who can report the incident on your behalf

## Protected characteristics

It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of a protected characteristic. The nine protected characteristics are;

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

## Equality Act 2010 Compliance and Sanctions

When a harmful behaviour is carried out as a result of discrimination of any of the above groups, or if the harmful behaviour includes abusive language or actions about any of the above groups, school will consider reporting the incident to the police.

As a school, we are fully committed to upholding the Equality Act 2010 and ensuring that no member of our community is discriminated against based on any of the nine protected characteristics. Bullying or harmful behaviour that is motivated by prejudice against these characteristics—such as racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, or discrimination related to disability, religion, or belief—will be treated with the utmost seriousness. In such cases, the school will escalate the incident to senior leadership. In line with statutory guidance and our own commitment to justice and inclusion, prejudice-based bullying may result in fixed-term suspension or permanent exclusion, and may also be referred to external agencies, including the police or Children’s Social Care, where appropriate.

## Record Keeping and Identifying Trends

At The Catholic High School, Chester, we use CPOMS (Child Protection Online Management System) to securely record, monitor, and manage incidents of concern, including harmful behaviours, acts of unkindness, discriminatory language, and bullying.

CPOMS is a secure safeguarding platform used by school staff to log incidents, attach relevant documents or communications, and alert designated safeguarding and pastoral leads. It ensures that concerns are not only addressed in the moment but also tracked over time, allowing for a joined-up and strategic response.

All incidents involving harmful behaviour, bullying, or potential breaches of the Equality Act 2010 are recorded on CPOMS. This includes both individual incidents and group dynamics. Incidents involving prejudice or discriminatory intent (e.g. racist, homophobic, transphobic, sexist, or disablist behaviour) are clearly flagged and categorised as such.

Regular reviews of CPOMS entries are conducted by Year Leads, Assistant Year Leads, and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to:

- Identify students who may require additional pastoral support
- Detect patterns of behaviour across year groups or social groups
- Inform preventative education (e.g. PSHE content, assemblies)
- Escalate repeat or serious incidents for further intervention, including parental contact, internal sanctions, or external referrals

By systematically recording incidents and identifying trends, we ensure that our response to harmful behaviour is proactive, consistent, and reflective of our commitment to safeguarding, equity, and the dignity of every individual.

## Stages of school response

### 1. Act of unkindness

- Victim spoken to in order to gather information
- Ringleader, assistant, reinforcer, and enabler spoken and given appropriate sanctions – immediate restorative, verbal rule reminder, behaviour incident recorded, parent communication if appropriate
- Form tutor to check in with Target, parents informed if appropriate

### 2. Harmful behaviour

- Investigation completed including statements from all involved and those who witnessed
- YLL to review
- Ringleader, assistant, reinforcer, and enabler given appropriate sanctions break, lunch or afterschool detention, placed in Ready to Learn, suspension.
- Incident logged on CPOMS as Harmful behaviour
- Parents of all involved informed
- AYLL to check in with Target

### 3. Bullying stage 1

- Investigation completed including statements from all involved and those who witnessed
- YLL to review
- Ringleader, assistant, reinforcer, and enabler given appropriate sanctions break, lunch or afterschool detention, placed in Ready to Learn, suspension.
- Incident logged on CPOMS as Bullying stage 1
- Parental interview with YLL
- Target check in by AYLL
- Trinity referral considered for Target and Ringleader in order to identify appropriate supportive interventions

### 4. Bullying Stage 2

- Investigation completed including statements from all involved and those who witnessed
- SLT to review
- Ringleader, assistant, reinforcer, and enabler given appropriate sanctions - afterschool detention, placed in Ready to Learn, suspension.
- Managed Move considered
- Incident logged on CPOMS as Bullying stage 2
- Parental interview with SLT
- Target check in by AYLL
- Trinity referral considered for Target and Ringleader in order to identify appropriate supportive interventions

### 5. Bullying stage 3

- Investigation completed including statements from all involved and those who witnessed
- Headteacher to review
- Ringleader, assistant, reinforcer, and enabler given appropriate sanctions – placed in Ready to Learn, suspension, permanent exclusion
- Alternative Provision considered
- Incident logged on CPOMS as Bullying stage 3
- Parental interview with Headteacher
- Target check-in by AYLL
- Reported to police and Children’s Social Care

N.B. - In order to ensure the investigation progresses without influence or when there may be risk to others, students may be directed to work out of general circulation until the investigation is complete. This is a neutral act and does not constitute a school sanction. Therefore, it will not count as part of any subsequent school sanction.

## Guidance considered

[Equality Act 2010](#)

[Keeping children safe in education 2024](#)

[Searching, Screening and confiscation: Advice for Schools.](#)

[Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Guidance](#)

[Behaviour in Schools: Advice for headteachers and school staff](#)

[Use of Reasonable Force. Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies.](#)

## Links to other relevant policies

[Attendance Policy](#)

[Drugs Policy](#)

[Special Education Needs and Disabilities Policy](#)

[Child-on-Child abuse/sexual harassment and violence policy](#)