NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME SCHOOL

Anti-Bullying and Anti-Cyber-Bullying Policy

This policy relates to Newcastle-under-Lyme School, including the EYFS. This policy is available upon request to parents and prospective parents and is published to parents and prospective parents on the School's website.

This policy has been written with due regard made to DfE "Cyberbullying – advice for head teachers and school staff " 2014, "Preventing and tackling bullying" July 2017, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.

1. Statement of Intent

At Newcastle-under-Lyme School, our community is based upon respect, good manners and fair play. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so that every one of our pupils can develop his/her full potential. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed, but orderly, atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other. Newcastle-under-Lyme School prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Ours is a diverse community, with pupils from a variety of cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds. Some pupils require additional support and help.

Parents/carers have an important role in supporting the School in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and home have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together. Acceptance of this policy forms part of our standard terms and conditions.

Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the School. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable. Where necessary, we will apply the sanctions described in our *Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy* for behaviour that constitutes bullying or harassment of any kind.

The School regards bullying as a form of peer-on-peer abuse; as such, where appropriate, it will be dealt with as a safeguarding issue. Victims of child on child abuse will be supported by the School's pastoral system and referred to specialist agencies if appropriate. Further details on the School's approach to child on child abuse can be found in the *Safeguarding Policy.*

2. Links
This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:
- *Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy*
- *Computer Network Agreement for Pupils Special*
- *Educational Needs & EAL Policy*
- *Safeguarding Policy*
- *Equal Opportunities Policy*

3. Aims and Objectives
The aims and objectives of the School's *Anti-Bullying and Anti Cyber-Bullying Policy* are:
- To clarify for pupils, parents and staff that bullying is always unacceptable.
- To ensure that every pupil has the right to be safe and happy in the School, and to be protected when he/she is feeling vulnerable.
- To reassure pupils and ensure that their concerns are taken seriously.
- To create an atmosphere where pupils who are being bullied, or others who know about it, can speak to a member of staff, feel that they will be listened to and be believed and given support, and that action taken will be swift but sensitive to their concerns once it is in the open.
- To make clear to the victim that revenge is not appropriate, and to the bully that his/her behaviour is unacceptable and has caused distress.
- To resolve problems through a variety of methods.

4. Definition of Bullying
At Newcastle under Lyme School we define bullying as: 'Behaviour by an individual or group, may be repeated over time (or may be a single incident which has the potential to be repeated), that intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally.' *Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for School Leaders, Staff and Governing Bodies.* The School may decide to take action in response to a single incident and will record this incident to look to spot patterns of behavior.

Bullying is the intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another person. It can take the form of racial, religious, cultural, sexual, sexist, homophobic, Special Educational Needs or disability related bullying or because a child is adopted or is a carer; bullying on the grounds of these characteristics is taken particularly seriously. It could involve physical (including sexual) intimidation, or bullying by verbal, cyber *[see section 7]* (including social websites, chat rooms, email, e-photographs, mobile phones and text messages), or emotional means (for example by excluding, tormenting or

spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidatory.

Bullying may involve actions or comments that are racist, homophobic, or which focus on disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape). Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time. It can cause serious emotional and physical impacts and lasting psychological damage and even suicide. Whilst bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour. Bullying conflicts sharply with the School's policy on equal opportunities, as well as with its social and moral principles and the code of conduct.

5. Signs of Bullying
A pupil may indicate by signs or behaviour that he/she is being bullied. Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:
- Unwillingness to return to school
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing, or are damaged
- Asking for money or stealing money (to pay the bully)
- Torn clothes
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary, or stopping eating)
- Psychological damage and diminished levels of self confidence
- Frequent visits to the School nurse with symptoms such as stomach pains or headaches etc
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- Choosing the company of adults
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping, experiences nightmares
- Talking of (or attempting) suicide or running away
- Giving implausible excuses to explain any of the above

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of, these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers.

6. Prevention of Bullying
Our first priority is to educate pupils in the seriousness of bullying with the aim of preventing it from happening in the first place. Our programme of education promotes an awareness of the psychological damage that bullying can cause to pupils (including suicide), and reminds pupils about the possible sanctions that can be imposed for bullying (ultimately including permanent exclusion).

Our programme includes:
• Lessons delivered through the PSHE programme, which 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 avoiding prejudice based language derived from differences between people and taking care of each other. It specifically tells pupils whom they should inform if they are being bullied, or are worried that another pupil is being bullied.
• Appropriate assemblies, which are used to reinforce our anti cyber-bullying and anti-bullying policy and notices and posters in classrooms. Our promotion of fundamental British values has an important part to play in developing student tolerance and respect for diversity.
• Other lessons within the curriculum that highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable and by developing social skills and discuss the role of the bystander.
• Staff are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class and patrol the School site, paying particular attention to areas where bullying might occur. They are advised to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour. Staff and senior pupils create an environment of good behaviour and respect.
• Staff are trained and discuss in Heads of Year meetings how to respond to bullying incidents and cyber-bullying incidents. Staff are made aware through training of this policy, the legal responsibilities and how to look to support and resolve situations. Staff are given advice on sources of further advice.   Staff can also call on specialist staff advice through Heads of Years and also through the School's Head of Learning Support when facing SEND or gender based bullying.

7. Cyber-bullying
School has a duty to provide a safe environment for all members of its community and in doing so recognises that technology plays an important and positive role, both educationally and socially, in everyone's lives. It is committed to helping all members of the school community to understand both the benefits and the risks, and to equip pupils with the knowledge and skills to be able to use technology safely and responsibly.

Cyber bullying may be defined asthe use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others", *Bill Belsey, creator of the web site:* www.cyberbullying.org

School recognises that cyber-bullying can involve Social Networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat, emails and mobile devices used for SMS messages and as cameras.

It can be used to reinforce face-to-face bullying. It can also invade personal space and can involve a greater number of people across age groups including targeting of

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adults. It can involve bystanders and includes: threats and intimidation; harassment or 'cyberstalking'; vilification/defamation; exclusion or peer rejection; impersonation; unauthorised publication of private information of images and manipulation of images. A single harmful posting on social media can be seen as bullying due to the nature of the medium and the potential for wider distribution. Some cyber-bullying activities could be criminal offences under a range of different laws including Protection from Harassment Act 1997.

Preventing Cyber-bullying

In addition to the preventative measures described in Section 6 above, NuLS takes the following precautions to reduce the risk of cyber bullying in School:
- Pupils sign an Acceptable Use Policy before they are allowed to use School computer equipment, the internet and Wi-Fi in school, and parents are encouraged to discuss its contents with their children.
- All pupils are expected to adhere to the School rules related to the use of electronic devices.
- School blocks certain sites by a filtering system and the School monitors pupils' use. The School uses filtering, firewall, anti-spyware software, anti-virus software and secure connections to safeguard the pupils. The Deputy Head Pastoral (DSL) and Assistant Head Pastoral (DDSL) receive daily updates on any attempted infringements and are alerted immediately if there a serious concern is flagged.
- Sanctions may be imposed for misuse or attempted misuse of the Internet.
- Access to external web-based email is not allowed. Pupils in Year 1 and above are issued with their own personal School email addresses.
- Guidance is given on safe use of social networking sites and anti cyber bullying.
- Guidance is provided on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe.
- The use of mobile phone and tablet cameras is not allowed in washing and changing areas.
- The School uses a variety of opportunities, in and out of the classroom to promote safe use of technology and provide guidance on dealing with and reporting cyber-bullying. The School encourages its pupils to be involved in a response to cyber-bullying e.g. through PSHE lessons.
- Parents are provided with information and advice on e-safety and cyber-bullying via regular communication with Heads of Year.
- As technology changes very quickly, the School seeks to provide opportunities for policies to be reviewed and for pupils to be involved in the process of updating and improving them.
- The School trains staff to ensure that they can recognise non-verbal signs and indications of cyberbullying.
- All members of the school community are informed about the various ways in which bullying can be reported and in addition there is reassurance that the school will deal sensitively with pupils who report concerns.
- Where there are concerns about misuse of technology, senior staff e.g. Heads of

Key Stage, Heads of Year, Deputy Head Pastoral in the Senior School and senior staff in the Prep School may request a pupil to reveal a message or other content and may confiscate equipment. If they consider that equipment may contain evidence of bullying they may investigate the specific contents relating to that act.

- As part of the annual Child Protection Safeguarding Audit there is a review of recorded bullying incidents and cyber-bullying in particular.

8. Procedure for Reporting Bullying

• All our pupils are encouraged to tell a member of the teaching staff (or the School Nurse) at once if they know that bullying is taking place inside or outside School.

• Every member of staff is advised on how to respond to such allegations.

• All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents. Records are kept so that patterns may be identified. Records will also show incidents of bullying which are based on protected characteristics so that the School can monitor relationships within school as part of its culture of instilling values of tolerance and respect. All behavioural and pastoral concerns are recorded on CPOMS this enables pastoral staff to spot and trends or concerns and act upon them. Bullying incidents will also be reported on the Anti Bullying Log.

• 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.

9. Procedures for Dealing with Reported Bullying

If an incident of bullying is reported, the following procedures are adopted:

• The member of staff to whom it was reported, or who first discovers the situation, will control the situation, reassure and support the pupils involved.

• He/she will inform an appropriate member of the pastoral team as soon as possible.

• The victim will be interviewed individually and asked to give an account of events, which will be recorded by the interviewer and checked with the pupil.

• The alleged bully, together with all others who were involved, and any independent witnesses, will be also interviewed individually and asked to give an immediate account of events, which will be recorded by the interviewer and checked with the pupil.

• The incident will be recorded.

• All relevant staff will be informed. In serious incidents, the Headmaster will be informed.

• After the incident has been investigated, the victim will be interviewed by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the alleged perpetrator. It will be made clear to him/her why revenge is inappropriate. He/she will be offered support to develop a strategy to help him or herself.

• The alleged bully will also be interviewed by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the victim, and it will be made clear why his/her behaviour was

inappropriate and caused distress. He/she will be offered guidance on modifying his or her behaviour, together with any appropriate disciplinary sanctions. The parents/carers of all parties will be informed and may be invited into school to discuss the matter. Their support will be sought. A way forward, including any disciplinary sanctions and counselling, will be confirmed. Parents will be informed about sanctions imposed. The specific circumstances of pupils with additional needs for example SEND pupil will also be considered when applying sanctions.

• In severe and persistent cases the School may consider suspension or permanent exclusion. This reinforces the message to the School community that all bullying is unacceptable and that the School has effective ways of dealing with it, so deterring others from behaving similarly.

• This procedure will recognise that suitable support is needed both for children who are being bullied and for pupils who bully others, as well as dealing with appropriate disciplinary measures.

• At staff discretion, a meeting led by staff and involving all the parties will be convened to agree a strategy for all concerned to close the episode.

• A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place for the pupils involved.

• All cases of bullying are recorded on the School's Bullying Log. These records are kept to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach adopted or patterns to be identified.

• It is the policy of Newcastle-under-Lyme School to attempt to resolve such issues internally under the School's own disciplinary procedures. However, in very serious or persistent cases, including those where a criminal prosecution is possible, and only after the Headmaster has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to Social Services.

• Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) states that child-on-child abuse can include bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying) and it is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers that are abusive in nature. Incidences of bullying where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm or is in need of additional support from Children's Social Care, will be treated as a safeguarding concern. Consideration will also be given to whether the perpetrator may be in need of early help or in need of additional support from Children's Social Care.

10. Procedures for dealing with reported cyber-bullying
Most cases of cyber-bullying will be dealt with through the School's existing anti-bullying strategy **[see Section 8]** and this is the framework within which all incidents of bullying are investigated. However, some features of cyber-bullying differ from other forms of bullying, for example the scale and scope of cyber-bullying can be greater than other forms of bullying and the people involved may have a different profile from perceived bullies. The anywhere and anytime nature of cyber-bullying means that the person being bullied will not always know who is bullying them and some pupils may not be aware that what they are doing is bullying. A single action of cyber bullying can have a repeated impact.

To support the pupil being cyber-bullied the School will:

- Offer support to the pupil; reassure pupils that they have done the right thing in reporting this to someone.
- Advise pupils to keep the evidence but not to retaliate or reply. Sometimes the victim may be able to block the bully from their sites and services.
- Unless the pupil sees it as a punishment, they may be recommended to change mobile phone number
- Try to remove hurtful or embarrassing content material from the web, ensuring those who posted it realise why it was wrong, or contact the host provider to report and get the content removed.

Investigation of cyber-bullying

- If any member of the community suspects cyber-bullying is taking place, in the Senior School they should contact the Head of Year or Heads of Key Stage or Assistant Head Pastoral or in the case of the Prep School a senior member of staff in the Prep School and the investigation will begin in accordance with the Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Victims will be asked for evidence of their abuse for example; saved phone messages, save-and-print messenger conversations, print a screenshot of social network pages, forward to staff whole email messages.
- If images are involved and they might be illegal or raise child protection concerns, the Designated Safeguarding Lead may involve children's social care, the police in cases of actual/suspected illegal content, or CEOP.
- Any allegations against staff will be handled following the School's *Safeguarding Policy* and the School's *Whistleblowing Policy*.
- The School will confiscate electronic devices where appropriate and suspend use of school network and Wi-Fi until the investigation is completed.

11. Response to Concerns

It is important that we help the person harmed to feel safe again and be assured that the bullying will stop and that we hold the perpetrator to account, getting them to recognize the harm caused and deter them from repeating the behavior. It is also important to demonstrate to the school community that bullying is unacceptable and that the School has effective ways of dealing with it, so deterring others from behaving similarly.

When a complaint of bullying behaviour is upheld the range of responses may include one or more of the following:

- Advice and support for the victim and, where appropriate, establishing a course of action to the help the victim, including support from school councillor or from external services where appropriate.
- Consideration as to whether the bullying incident should be addressed as a safeguarding concern and if so, the School's *Safeguarding Policy* and procedures will be followed.

- Advice and support to the bully in trying to change their behaviour. This may include clear instructions or sanction.
- Consideration of the motivation behind the bullying behaviour and whether external services should be used to tackle any underlying issues of the bully which contributed to the bullying behaviour. If these considerations give rise to any safeguarding concerns relating to the bullying behaviour, the School's safe guarding procedures will be followed;
- A supervised meeting between the bully and the victim to discuss their differences and the ways in which they may be able to avoid future conflict (only with the victim's express agreement);
- A disciplinary sanction against the bully, in accordance with the School's *Behaviour, Rewards and Sanction Policy*. Parents will always be informed about sanctions imposed. The sanctions available are set out in the *Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy.* In applying sanctions, consideration will be given to type and impact of bullying and the possibility that it was unintentional or was in retaliation. The specific circumstances of pupils with additional needs will also be considered. The outcome will include helping the bully to recognize the consequence of their actions and providing support to enable the attitude and behaviour of the bully to change.
- Confiscation of mobile electronic devices, increased monitoring procedures or limiting access to the School's internet and email facilities in cases of cyberbullying;
- Moving either the bully or victim to another form after consultation with the pupil, their parents and the relevant staff;
- Involving children's social care or the police if there is a safeguarding concern;
- Parents of pupils involved will be informed.
- Notifying external agencies where appropriate;
- Such other action as may appear to the Headmaster to be appropriate;
- The incident and outcome will recorded in the Anti Bullying Log as well as on the pupil's file (CPOMS).

12. Sources of Help and Advice
- In the Senior School we have a strong and experienced pastoral team of Form Tutors, Heads of Year and Heads of Key Stage who support the Assistant and Deputy Head Pastoral. In the Prep School, strong pastoral care is likewise provided by staff who support the Head of Prep School, Deputy Head, Assistant Heads (Prep and Pre Prep) and Nursery Manager.
- All staff are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority, and are alert to possible signs of bullying.
- Our pastoral teams give support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, or more complex issues, and on the follow-up work with both victims and bullies.
- All pupils in need of impartial and independent advice may speak to the Nurse, who visits the School for one day each week.
- Noticeboards and the School offices display the contact details of useful

organisations, including details of confidential help lines and websites connecting to external specialists such as Childline, the Samaritans, the NSPCC, Staffordshire Victim Support and the Police.

- We provide leadership training to our Upper Sixth Prefects which specifically covers the importance of offering support and assistance to younger and to vulnerable pupils.
- We welcome feedback from parents and carers on the effectiveness of our preventative measures.
- Any allegations of bullying or cyber bullying against staff will be handled through the School's *Safeguarding Policy* and *Complaints Policy*.

13. Further Advice to Pupils

Treat those around you with respect and consideration. Witnessing bullying and doing nothing suggests support for the bullying. If you do witness someone you know bullying another pupil you should try to make clear to the bully that you disagree with his/her actions.

We all have a responsibility to make sure that bullying is not allowed to continue in the School.

14. Further Advice to Parents

If you think your child is being bullied, or is involved in bullying in some way, please let the School know straight away.

Talk to your children about the subject. Let them know you will be supportive and encourage them to confide in you. Re-assure your child that the School will deal with the matter sensitively.

The Headmaster updates the Chair of Governors at their weekly meetings of any bullying or cyber bullying issues which may have arisen in school.

The Senior Management Team will regularly review and analyse the operational effectiveness of this policy, taking full account of the views of pupils, in order to maintain the momentum in action against bullying. The Governors will receive an annual report and review the operational effectiveness of the policy and its implementation.

J A Simms

Policy Reviewed at SMT: September 2023

Next Review Due: September 2024