



MAIDSTONE
GRAMMAR SCHOOL
FOUNDED 1549

Anti-Bullying Policy

Key Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) / SENCo: Miss R Johnson
Named Governor with lead responsibility: Mrs C Norey

This policy will be reviewed every two years or following any concerns and/or updates to national/local guidance or procedures

Ratified by Governor October 2023

To be reviewed January 2025

Maidstone Grammar School Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy is based on DfE guidance “[Preventing and Tackling Bullying](#)” July 2017 and supporting documents. It also considers the most up to date version of the DfE statutory guidance “[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)”.

1) Policy objectives:

- This policy outlines what Maidstone Grammar School will do to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying.
- The policy has been drawn up with the involvement of the wider school community.
- Maidstone Grammar School is committed to developing a safe and supportive community where the bullying of adults, children or young people is not tolerated in any form.

The School Council has reviewed and endorsed this Policy and has created the following statement to be included in the Policy:

Statement by the School Council – Anti-bullying at MGS

Maidstone Grammar School endeavours to create a safe, supportive and positive environment for all members of the community. The MGS Student Code of Conduct makes the school’s expectations for conduct clear.

MGS is committed to tackling bullying - it does not accept or tolerate bullying and recognises that it has a negative impact on the individuals involved and the wider community.

MGS proactively seeks to educate about and prevent bullying through its daily work and through its PSHCE programme, assembly and tutor time programmes, its anti-bullying week and themed months, posters and displays. Nonetheless, we also recognise that bullying does occur in schools and environments where students are interacting face to face and / or online.

Therefore, MGS encourages students to report any concerns, however small, to any member of staff. As a school, we emphasise that “It’s good to talk” and we also encourage students to share concerns through our regular, confidential online welfare surveys or by messaging staff 1:1 in Teams.

MGS has clear systems for dealing with bullying. The school uses a range of approaches and responses depending on each incident but it always places emphasis on encouraging respect, kindness and acceptance of our individual differences.

MGS School Council

2) Links with other School Policies

This policy links with several school policies including:

- MGS Behaviour Policy
- MGS Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
- MGS Online Safety Policy
- MGS Student Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)
- MGS SEN and Disability Policy and Information Report
- Mobile phone and devices Policy
- Searching, screening and confiscation policy

Key Policies can be found on the School website at: <https://mgs.kent.sch.uk/about-us/our-policies-and-documents/>

3) Links to Legislation

There are several pieces of legislation which set out measures and actions for schools in response to bullying, as well as criminal and civil law. These may include (but are not limited to):

- The Education and Inspection Act 2006, 2011
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Children Act 1989
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986

4) Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of:

- The Headmaster and the Designated Safeguarding Lead, supported by the Extended Senior Leadership Team, to communicate this policy to the school community and to ensure that disciplinary measures are applied fairly, consistently and reasonably.
- Governors to take a lead role in monitoring and reviewing this policy.
- All staff, including Governors, Extended Senior Leadership Team, teaching and non-teaching staff, to support, to uphold and implement this policy accordingly.
- Parents/carers to support their children and work in partnership with the school.
- Students to abide by the policy.

5) Definition of Bullying

Bullying can be defined as “*behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally*”. (DfE “Preventing and Tackling Bullying”, July 2017)

- Bullying can include name calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; taking belongings; producing offensive graffiti; gossiping; excluding people from groups and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.
- This includes the same unacceptable behaviours expressed online, sometimes called online or cyberbullying. This can include: sending offensive, upsetting and inappropriate messages by phone, text, instant messenger, through gaming, websites, social media sites and apps, and sending offensive or degrading photos or videos.
- Bullying is recognised by the school as being a form of child on child abuse. It can be emotionally abusive and can cause severe and adverse effects on children’s emotional development.

6) Forms and types of Bullying covered by this Policy

Bullying can happen to anyone. This policy covers all types and forms of bullying including:

- Bullying related to physical appearance
- Bullying of young carers, children in care or otherwise related to home circumstances
- Bullying related to physical/mental health conditions
- Physical bullying
- Emotional bullying
- Sexual bullying

- Bullying via technology, known as online or cyberbullying
- Prejudicial bullying (against people/students with protected characteristics):
 - Bullying related to race, religion, faith and belief and for those without faith
 - Bullying related to ethnicity, nationality or culture
 - Bullying related to Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND)
 - Bullying related to sexual orientation (homophobic/biphobic bullying)
 - Gender based bullying, including transphobic bullying
 - Misogynistic bullying / sexual harassment / sexual violence
 - Bullying against teenage parents (pregnancy and maternity under the Equality Act)

7) School Ethos

- Maidstone Grammar School recognises that all forms of bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals; it can create a barrier to learning and have serious consequences for mental wellbeing.
- By effectively preventing and tackling bullying our school can help to create a safe and disciplined environment, where students are able to learn and fulfil their potential.

Our Community:

-Monitors and reviews our anti-bullying policy, practices and procedures on a regular basis.

-Will endeavour to respond as promptly and effectively as possible to resolve any concerns raised.

-Recognises that some members of our community may be more vulnerable to bullying and its impact than others; these may include children with SEND and LGBTQ+ children and young people.

-At Maidstone Grammar School we make it clear to all staff that even if there are no reports of bullying in the school it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. Staff should maintain an attitude of professional curiosity and an approach of “It could happen here”. It is important that if staff have any concerns regarding bullying / child on child abuse they should pass this on immediately to the DSL / Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs)

-At MGS we make it clear that everybody has a responsibility to challenge inappropriate behaviours between peers. We do not dismiss inappropriate behaviours, as “just banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys” as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours where children accept this as normal and do not come forward to report it.

-Ensures that our students understand the school’s expectations for their behaviour as laid out in the MGS Student Code of Conduct; that they understand how they can report a concern (including face to face to any member of staff , via Teams 1:1 chat, via “Report Any Concern” on school email and through the ReportAnyConcern Confidentially form on the school website); how the school deals with concerns, including dealing with them as sensitively and effectively as possible.

-Recognises the potential impact of bullying on the wider family of those affected so will endeavour to work positively and in partnership with parents/carers regarding bullying concerns, keeping them informed of key developments.

-Will deal promptly with grievances regarding the school response to bullying in line with our complaints policy

-Utilises support from the Local Authority and other relevant organisations when appropriate.

8) Responding to Bullying

Maidstone Grammar School recognises that every individual and every concern will be different and therefore require a level of tailored, individualised response.

a) The following steps outline our standard school procedures when dealing with any behaviour incident, including incidents of bullying / cyberbullying:

-If bullying is seen, suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with as soon as possible. All concerns should be passed on as soon as possible to the DSL/ DDSLs (where there are safeguarding concerns), Student Services Department and / or House Teams (Head of House / Assistant Head of House).

-If staff are present at the time and witness an incident/ concern then they should immediately intervene to support the victim and ensure that the perpetrator is escorted to or brought to the attention of the Student Services Department as soon as possible.

-Students concerned, including the victim, the alleged perpetrator, other witnesses (if relevant) will be interviewed and / or asked to write a statement giving full details of the incident. This will be co-ordinated by the DSL/ DDSL (where there are safeguarding concerns) and / or Student Services Department.

-In cases involving cyberbullying / online activity the school may: look at activity on school IT systems; contact the service provider and / or police, if necessary; contact safeguarding staff in other schools if students from other settings are involved; work with the individuals, parent/carers and online service providers to prevent the incident from spreading and assist in or advise on removing offensive or upsetting material from circulation; confiscate and search student electronic devices, such as mobile phones, in accordance with the law and the school searching and confiscation policy; request the deletion of locally-held content and content posted online if they contravene school behavioural policies; make a referral to Kent Integrated Children's Services if appropriate.

-Once the incident has been investigated the school will take steps to resolve the matter as promptly and effectively as possible (drawing upon the responses listed below in part d).

-The school will provide appropriate support to the victim. The school will take steps to ensure that they are not at risk of immediate or future harm and will involve them in decision-making about next steps, where reasonably possible.

-The school will work with and support the perpetrator/s in order to ensure that they understand why their conduct is unacceptable, using its best endeavours to ensure that the behaviour will not happen again.

-The school will ensure parents/carers are kept informed about concerns and actions taken, as appropriate and in line with safeguarding and child protection and confidentiality policies. The school will not provide detailed information about how it deals with students to other parents / carers / parties.

b) Depending on the circumstances of each case, the school's response may draw on one or more of the following strategies:

-key staff giving guidance to students involved to clarify behaviour expectations moving forward and ensure that the perpetrators understand the impact of their actions.

-providing ongoing pastoral support e.g from the form tutor, Head of House / Assistant Head of House or members of the Student Services Department.

-using restorative justice approaches (where agreed with the victim);

- issuing community service to perpetrators so that students can “give something positive back to the community”;
- removing school privileges for perpetrators such as representing the school in sports’ teams or removing prefect status; placing the student under supervision during unstructured time for a fixed period.
- drawing upon the full range of school sanctions, including suspension or permanent exclusion where appropriate.
- Exploring how both the victim and the perpetrator can be supported going forward and making sure the victim knows what to do if there are any further concerns e.g. report immediately; making sure the perpetrator knows what will happen if there are further concerns (such as escalating sanctions).
- Working towards restoring student self-esteem and confidence e.g. through participation in the school’s extra curricular programme or involvement in the vertical form group.
- Offering additional 1:1 support to the victim and / or perpetrator via the school counsellor or Mind worker.
- Signposting external sources of support such as <https://www.kooth.com/>
- Provide information to staff and students regarding steps they can take to protect themselves online.
- Communicating with relevant staff members, where appropriate, so that they can monitor, exercise vigilance and make adjustments to support the victim where appropriate e.g. amend seating plans.
- Engaging with community police to work with and educate the perpetrator about acceptable behaviours.
- If necessary, other agencies may be consulted or involved, such as the police, if it is suspected that a criminal offence may have been committed, or other local services including Early Help or Children’s Social Care, if a child is felt to be at risk of significant harm. The school may seek advice from the Kent Education Safeguarding Service. The school will endeavour not to take any actions which might hinder or undermine any active Police investigations.
- Where the bullying of or by students takes place off school site or outside of normal school hours (including cyberbullying), the school will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the concern is fully investigated. If required, the DSL will collaborate with other schools. Appropriate action will be taken, including providing support and implementing sanctions in school in accordance with this policy and the school’s Behaviour Policy and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- The school records, tracks and monitors all behaviour and bullying incidents

9) Creating a safe and supportive culture and reducing bullying at MGS

There are many ways in which we proactively seek to create a safe and supportive culture and environment in the school and reduce bullying:

- Our practices and procedures are underpinned by our whole school policies which are regularly reviewed.
- We train all of our staff and students about safeguarding e.g. our whole school safeguarding training and assemblies which highlight safeguarding procedures at MGS, how to report a concern and focus on key safeguarding issues such as child on child abuse, **racism** and sexual harassment/ harmful sexual behaviours amongst many other areas. We are explicit about the issues and our expectations. We are explicit about the fact that we do not dismiss inappropriate behaviour as just banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys”
- The MGS Student Code of Conduct make clear to everyone what our key expectations for conduct and behaviour are. It emphasises the importance of accepting all our individual differences through our words and actions and we have a “hands off” rule. Mobile devices are not permitted to be used by any students in Year 7-11 except when explicitly instructed by a teacher for an educational purpose.
- We have a highly experienced pastoral team and Student Services Department to support our students and address issues arising. Key staff work with external agencies to support students in our care.
- There are regular opportunities for “Student Voice” including through the House and School Council system and tutor groups and via our regular confidential online welfare surveys.

- Our vertical tutor group and house system fosters and supports the development of positive relationships between different age groups through our vertical tutor group system.
- Our extensive extra curricular programme supports students to meet interact with others from the wider school community and develop and share interests together.
- Key safeguarding and social issues are focused on by our form time programme and student led Inspire to Belong themes throughout the year, including an anti-bullying month focus in November.
- Our wider academic curriculum includes equality, diversity and inclusivity (EDI) themes and topics e.g. PSHCE, RS, Art, History, English, Performing Arts schemes of work.
- Safeguarding issues and EDI themes are highlighted in the whole school assembly programme.
- Our high quality PSHCE curriculum focuses on safeguarding and EDI issues.

10) Monitoring and review:

- The school will regularly review this policy.
- The school tracks and monitors behaviour and bullying incidents in the school to identify any significant trends; information is reported to the Governors by the DSL.
- Any issues identified will be incorporated into the school's action planning.