

# Merchant Taylors' Schools, Crosby

# **Antibullying Policy**

Policy Owner	Deputy and Assistant Heads - Pastoral		
Last reviewed by Date	Deputy and Assistant Heads – Pastoral May 2025		
Last approved by <u>D</u> ate	Board of Governors June 2025		
Frequency of review	Annual		
Next policy review by owner	April 2026		
Next policy approved by Board of Governors (if applicable)	Education & Safeguarding Committee Summer Term 2026		
Circulation:	All Staff Governors Parents and Pupils		
Related Policies:	School Parents Handbook Code of Conduct (Pupils) Staff Handbook ICT Acceptable User Policy E-Safety Policy Pastoral Care Policy PSHE Policy RSE Policy Behaviour Policy		
Regulatory Body (if applicable)	Department for Education Independent Schools Inspectorate		
Relevant legislation/guidelines	DfE Preventing and Tackling Bullying (July 2017) and Cyberbullying Advice for headteachers and school staff (2014) Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2014 (as amended)  DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024  DfE Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023/updates 2024		

# Policy

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#### 1. Context

All schools have a duty to draw up procedures to prevent bullying and to bring these procedures to the attention of staff, parents and pupils under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The school's policy and procedures also take into account the guidance given in the DFE's Preventing and Tackling Bullying 2017, Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff (2014), Behaviour and Discipline in Schools 2016 and the guidance given in the ISSR handbook September 2017.

#### 2. Rationale

The school will not tolerate bullying and will do everything possible to discourage it. We believe that all students have the right to be educated in an environment where there is mutual respect and cooperation. Merchant Taylors' School aims to provide a safe and caring environment in which each of its pupils feels secure in an environment where they can express themselves freely, form relationships and learn at their own pace.

If bullying does occur, we aim to ensure that the person being bullied is safe, we work to stop the bullying from happening again and we provide support to the person being bullied and, where appropriate, the perpetrator. Parents, teachers and support staff must be alert to signs of bullying, and all members of the school community must report any bullying they experience or witness to the victim's form teacher.

All staff will always take reports of bullying seriously and will always ensure they are thoroughly investigated. Serious instances of bullying may be regarded as safeguarding issues and as such may be reported to the designated staff safeguarding leads and dealt with under the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. In some instances, and where a criminal offence may have been committed it will be appropriate to liaise with the Police.

Because bullying is prevalent in the news and is a form of real anxiety for parents and carers it is important that we inform them about our approach to bullying, so that they are able to distinguish between what is bullying and what is not.

#### 3. Aims of the Anti-Bullying Policy

The School aims:

- To prevent bullying from happening by proactively teaching pupils about what it is and the harm it can do
- To create an atmosphere in which all pupils feel secure and valued
- To recognise that within the School Community no one deserves to be a victim of bullying
- To increase awareness and to encourage pupils to report concerns regarding bullying by being upstanders and reporters
- To respond appropriately and effectively to instances of bullying and have a consistent approach to any bullying incidents that occur
- To provide protection, support and reassurance for victims

- To develop the self-confidence and self-esteem of all pupils
- To cultivate pupils' talents, free from the envy of their peers
- To promote appreciation of diversity all pupils are accepted for who they are, no matter how different they are to peers
- To nurture students to be empathetic, respectful and considerate of others
- To ensure that parents, pupils and members of staff understand what bullying is and understand the school's policy on bullying and follow it, including by reporting any instances of bullying they come across
- To work with those students who engage in bullying activities to ensure that they recognise and learn different ways of behaving
- To ensure all staff are aware of and take into consideration the different needs of pupils challenged by issues such as visual or auditory impairment, reduced mobility, poor mental health, dyslexia and other SEND considerations
- To keep governors updated about serious instances of bullying and for governors to review the policy annually and to check on its effective implementation

#### 4 Definition of Bullying

There is no legal definition of bullying, however our school definition is the **intentional hurting** of one person or a group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an **imbalance of power**. It can happen either as an isolated incident or repetitively over time; bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen **face to face** or via the **use of technology**.

#### 5. Roles involved in bullying incidents

- The Target the person at whom the bullying is aimed.
- The Ringleader initiates and leads the bullying.
- The Assistant actively involved in 'doing' the bullying but does not lead it.
- The Reinforcer supports the bulling or encourages what is going on but doesn't do it.
- The Outsider ignores or doesn't see the bullying and doesn't get involved.
- The Defender stands up for someone who is being bullied. Knows that bullying is wrong and feels confident enough to defend. They might talk to an adult in school.

#### 6. Examples of Bullying

- **6.1** Bullying can be (but is not limited to):
  - Physical assault including playfighting
  - Derogatory name calling of an insulting and / or personal nature
  - Verbal abuse and threats
  - Abusive or threatening emails, texts, instant messages or calls on mobile phones

- Hijacking or cloning email or social networking accounts, or using email or social networking to impersonate a person
- The use of mobile phone camera images to cause distress, fear or humiliation
- Demanding money, material goods or favours by means of threat or force
- Ridiculing an individual because of physical, economic, sexual, intellectual, cultural or racial difference or religious belief
- Graffiti designed to intimidate or embarrass
- Sending unpleasant texts or making threats or mocking someone online (see the section on cyberbullying at the end of this document)
- Posting threatening, abusive, offensive or humiliating material or comments on websites (including blogs, personal websites and social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat or YouTube)
- Incitement of others to commit acts of bullying
- Prejudice based: Racist, sexist, misogynistic, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic
- behaviour
- Mocking their contributions in class
- Saying or doing hurtful things to or about someone on the basis of their or their family member's actual or perceived sexual orientation
- Saying or doing hurtful things to or about someone on the basis of their, ethnic, social, cultural or religious background, a disability or special educational need, because they are in the care of the Local Authority or are acting as a carer, or because of an issue in their family
- Hitting, kicking, or otherwise inflicting physical pain
- 6.2 Bullying on the basis of protected characteristics is taken particularly seriously. The School has adopted the definition of racism, as defined in the MacPherson report: 'Conduct or words which advantage or disadvantage people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. In its subtle form it is as damaging as its more overt form.' Examples can include:
  - Race (racist bullying)
  - Religion or beliefs
  - Culture or class
  - Gender (sexist bullying)
  - Sexual orientation (homophobic or biphobic bullying)
  - Gender identity (transphobic bullying)
  - Special Education needs or disability
  - Appearance or health conditions

The school recognises that pupils who identify as being LGBTQIA+ or who are perceived as such may be subject to bullying. The school seeks to foster a culture of tolerance and acceptance of diversity and addresses issues of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in PSHE, in other subjects where appropriate, and through assemblies.

All members of the school community are reminded to use language that is respectful of, and kind towards, others and to avoid language that perpetuates stereotypes or offends others. The school does not tolerate the use of derogatory language and its use will be challenged and recorded by staff.

- 6.3 Relational aggression is described as behaviours that harm others through damage to relationships or feelings of acceptance, friendship or group inclusion (Crick and Grotpeter 1995). It refers to deliberate actions that intend to negatively affect an individual's friendships or reputation. Such actions, if ignored, can lead to social exclusion. The school takes relational aggression seriously and addresses the issues associated with it through our PSHE and assembly programmes. Examples include:
  - Deliberately excluding someone
  - Spreading rumours and gossip
  - Breaking secrets
  - Imitating or mocking a pupil
  - Teasing or embarrassing a pupil

#### 7. Bullying outside of school (including cyber bullying)

- **7.1.** Any reports of bullying of one member of the school community by another member will be treated in accordance with this policy, regardless of when and where the incident takes place. While bullying that happens off-site or outside school hours is not directly within our control, the school will get involved if it is having an impact on student's well-being, behaviour, or ability to learn in school. We take all forms of bullying seriously and will work with parents and other relevant parties to support those affected. The Headteacher will also consider whether it is appropriate to notify external agencies including the Police.
- 7.2 The school is committed to teaching pupils and parents about e-safety and the dangers of cyberbullying and online exploitation. These topics are covered for pupils in PSHE and ICT lessons, as well as assemblies. Pupils are given age-appropriate advice about the dangers of the internet, including the risk of online grooming. Internet Safety Awareness Week also reinforces these messages. The school has clear rules about the use of mobile phones and cameras as highlighted in the Mobile Phone Policy.

In a fast-changing world, continued vigilance by staff, parents and pupils is encouraged. The school's policies and code of conduct are explicit about the unacceptability of teasing, mocking or threatening others online. As with other forms of bullying, all members of the school community are encouraged to report any instances of cyberbullying.

All bullying can be disturbing, but cyberbullying is particularly damaging. Not only is there often the threat of anonymity, but the bullying does not stop at 'the school gate'.

Cyberbullying on the internet endures and is repetitive by virtue of the fact that any further viewing and commentary (in a global audience) will proliferate the abuse. Also, owing to its remoteness, the perpetrator will not necessarily see the subsequent, ongoing effect on the victim and may deem the comment as 'just a bit of fun'. Cyberbullying can include threats and intimidation, defamation, harassment, exclusion or peer rejection, impersonation and unauthorised publication of private information or images. It can also include messages or images and videos intended as jokes, but which have an upsetting or harmful outcome. Any case of cyberbullying should be reported to the School, together with any supporting evidence, such as, but not limited to screenshots, which will use its discretion to determine whether or not to report the case to the police. The same Procedures will be followed as for bullying, as outlined above).

Preventative measures for the prevention of cyberbullying

#### The School:

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its ICT Acceptable User Policy and Mobile Phone Policy for Pupils.
- Blocks certain sites through our filtering system, as well as through our 'Light Speed' monitoring system to monitor pupils' use, alerting DSLs to inappropriate usage via email.
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying in PSHE lessons, which covers blocking, removing contacts from "friend" lists and sharing personal data.
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe.
- Restricts the pupils' use of mobile phones, as described in the School's Mobile Phone Policy
- Does not allow the use of cameras or mobile phones in any area of the school campus, especially toilets, washing and changing areas.

#### Parents should:

- Place Internet-accessible computers in an open living area. This naturally reduces the temptation to view / deal in inappropriate or harmful content.
- Visit www.thinkuknow.co.uk and read the advice about technical filters. It is
  possible to have filters on smartphones and mobile devices to protect your child.
- As a School, we ask that you read our ICT Acceptable User Policy and Mobile Phone Policy, so that you and your son fully understand what we deem to be the use and misuse of technology.

#### Pupils should:

Respect other people's privacy.

- Never do online what they would not do face-to-face.
- Consider how other people would feel and not communicate anything which would cause alarm or distress deliberately or 'by mistake'.

#### 8. Signs that someone might be a victim of bullying

Please note, this is not an exhaustive list but a summary of some common indications that someone is being bullied. They could also be signs of other difficulties but should give rise to investigating the possibility of bullying. Parents and teachers should look out for a pupil:

- Seeming afraid of the journey to or from school, asking to be taken to school when they
  have previously been happy to walk or take public transport unaccompanied
- Making unexplained changes to their routine
- Trying to get out of going to school, e.g. by claiming to be ill when nothing really seems wrong with them, playing truant
- Becoming anxious and withdrawn, appearing to have lost confidence.
- Changes to behaviour such as stammering, easily becoming tearful, having a disturbed sleep pattern
- Possessions or clothes being frequently lost or damaged, asking for money without explaining why they need it
- A sudden decline in school-work
- Becoming aggressive towards siblings
- Unwilling to use mobile phones or computers or using them obsessively
- Unexplained cuts or bruises, self-harming, preoccupied with suicide

#### 9. Preventing bullying: How we set the right ethos of being a "telling" school

- **9.1** The School acknowledges that bullying happens in all schools, including this school. It is distressing to the victims and represents a problem that has to be addressed seriously. The school takes proactive measures to foster positive relationships and mutual respect.
- **9.2** A telling school is one where students do inform staff when bullying is taking place.
- **9.3** If students who feel they are being bullied are to tell us about bullying we must work together to create an atmosphere of trust. Students who are classed as targets must know that their concerns will be taken seriously and recognise that investigations take time.
- **9.4** We must also make it as easy as possible to report bullying. They must understand that these may result in a number of different outcomes, some of which might be subject to confidentiality.
- 9.5 It will be made clear to all pupils that bullying is not acceptable. Pupils are encouraged to report any incidents to their Form Teacher or any member of staff and these are investigated promptly. Such reports are recorded by school staff on CPOMs. The School aims to create a climate of trust in which reporting to an adult is the normal response to

bullying rather than passive acceptance or violent reaction. Pupils with learning difficulties may be particularly at risk of bullying and, therefore, staff should be particularly aware of potential problems with these pupils

- 9.6 We will educate pupils through assemblies, form time activities and PSHE curriculum so that they understand bullying related to child on child abuse, and gender and sexual harassment linked to KCSIE safeguarding responsibilities. A statement on bullying appears in every classroom. (see Appendix 1).
- **9.7** Anti-Bullying ambassadors, at KS3 and 4, have been selected and trained to support their peers.
- **9.8** The school's programme of extracurricular activities enables pupils to achieve and to develop self-esteem and good relationships beyond the classroom.
- 9.9 The school has a clearly defined pastoral system based around Form Teachers, Heads of Year (At the secondary school) and the Assistant Heads-Pastoral. Pupils may also seek support from the School Medical Team and the School Counsellors. The House System fosters integration and community, allowing younger pupils to be supported by older students.

Professional training is available to promote staff understanding of the problems of bullying and cyber-bullying, including the specific needs pupils with protected characteristics, for example BAME and LGBTQ+ pupils, and taking action to reduce the risk of bullying at times and in places where it is most likely. Training courses are made available to all Staff. The issue is also discussed at Pastoral Team meetings.

#### 10 How to deal with Bullying and who to tell

- **10.1** Each year at the start of the Autumn Term we will remind all our students to take the following action if they feel they are being bullied. These messages will also be reinforced throughout the year:
  - if you feel able to, then let the perpetrator know that you do not like what is happening to them and ask them to stop.
  - if the bullying doesn't stop, tell someone in school who will initiate action to sort out the problem.
  - Use the Whisper app. to notify the Assistant Head, Pastoral (Senior School)
  - Use the Worry Boxes to notify the Assistant Head, Pastoral (Stanfield)

Pupils are supported in understanding the clear distinction between bullying and friendship issues. While disagreements or fallouts can occur in any relationship, bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour that is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power. Helping pupils to recognise this difference is essential in ensuring that genuine concerns are appropriately addressed, and that all students feel safe, supported, and understood.

- **10.2** If bullying behaviour is witnessed by our students, as part of taking on the role as defender, we ask that they too report their concerns using the above protocols. However, we emphasise that students must not use physicality or verbal abuse to try and resolve a matter.
- 10.3 If a parent or carer has a concerns regarding bullying behaviour, we ask that it is reported to their child's Form Tutor (Senior School) or Class Teacher (Stanfield) in the first instance. This will be logged and the matter investigated. If a parent does not know who the appropriate member of staff is, they should contact the School and the Receptionist will advise them.

Parents are able to discuss bullying by speaking at Parents' Forum Events and at Parents' Evenings.

- **10.4** Any member of staff who witnesses bullying should ensure that all parties, in the first instance are safe. All staff are aware that they must:
  - Listen carefully to what you are being told. Alleged victims must feel listened to.
  - Clarify what you are told where, when, who how etc.
  - Take immediate action to safeguard the victim in line with the School's Safeguarding Policy
  - Do not offer confidentiality. Make it clear that you may have to report it elsewhere. Ensure that the student knows who else will be told.
  - Reassure the alleged victim that they will be taken seriously.
  - As soon as possible, write down what you have been told using the pupil's own words. It may be appropriate for the child to write down their own version of events.
  - It should then be reported to the Form Tutor (Senior School) or Class Teacher (Stanfield) in the first instance. On occasion, it may be necessary to report the incident directly to Division level or a member of the SLT

#### 11 Who should investigate and recording of incidents

- 11.1 In the first instance we would expect the pupil's Form Tutor (Senior School) or Class Teacher (Stanfield) to discuss any issues with their tutees and suggest possible solutions. They will make a judgement as to whether this is a friendship issue or a more serious issue of bullying behaviour.
  - If this is ineffective or the Form Tutor believes he/she needs help in resolving an issue or believes that there is a more serious issue of bullying behaviour he/she will liaise with the pupil's Head or Assistant Head of Division (Senior School) or Assistant Head, Pastoral (Stanfield).
- **11.2** Where further investigation into a complaint of bullying behaviour is required it will be carried out in most cases by either the Head of Division or Assistant Head of Division (Senior School) or Assistant Head, Pastoral (Stanfield.) On occasion, in the Senior School, this could be the Form Tutor or either the Assistant Head or Deputy Head, Pastoral.

The School adopts an open conversation approach to dealing with bullying. Staff involved in managing bullying incidents ensure ongoing communication to keep all relevant colleagues informed. This includes maintaining regular conversations with the student's Form Tutor, Division staff, and members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Such collaboration ensures a consistent and supportive approach, allowing all staff to monitor the situation effectively, provide appropriate support, and respond swiftly to any further concerns.

**11.3** The need for gathering evidence If we are to deal with incidents fairly, we must gather as much evidence as soon as possible in order to try to establish the facts.

Pupils will be spoken to and witness statements written. Whilst we try to avoid pupils being removed from class to facilitate this, it has to be acknowledged that on occasion, this is unavoidable.

Parents do not need to be informed prior to nor do they need to be present during their child being interviewed as a witness.

- **11.4** Confidential notes of all reported incidents of bullying behaviour will be kept securely on CPOMS for all pupils involved in a particular incident. This includes witnesses.
- 11.5 The use of CPOMS enables the school to systematically analyse data, helping to identify patterns or significant issues, particularly those involving bullying related to protected characteristics. This data-driven approach allows Assistant and Deputy Heads to develop and implement targeted strategies to effectively address and reduce such incidents, promoting a safer and more inclusive school environment.
- 11.6 Governors review this policy annually and review and scrutinise the data pertaining to bullying incidents. The Deputy Head, Pastoral (Senior School) and Assistant Head, Pastoral (Stanfield) meet termly with members of the governing body to discuss bullying incidents and trends and any relevant strategies that have been (or will be implemented) and their success.

#### 12. Sanctions

- 12.1 Sanctions are applied fairly, proportionately, consistently and reasonably, taking account of any SEN or disabilities that pupils may have, and taking into consideration the needs of vulnerable children. Bullying by children with disabilities or SEN is no more acceptable than bullying by other children and it should be made clear that their actions are wrong and appropriate sanctions imposed. We expect all students to be proactive and seek help from members of staff if they witness another student being hurt or they are concerned about others.
  - The sanctions that could be used are those found in the School's Behaviour Policy and can include suspension or permanent exclusion.
- **12. 2** Often it will be necessary to apply a hybrid approach of sanction combined with restorative conversations and/or further education on specific matters.

- 12.3 Any sanctions will be confidential between the school, the pupil receiving the sanction and their parents/carers.
- 12.4 In certain cases, where bullying is particularly serious or involves safeguarding concerns, it may be necessary to refer the matter to external agencies. This can include Children's Services or the police, especially if the behaviour constitutes harassment, threats, or other criminal actions. These steps are taken to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all pupils and to demonstrate that such behaviour is treated with the seriousness it warrants.

#### 13. Engaging with parents and carers

We believe it is important for our school to work with parents/carers to help them to understand our approach with regards to bullying and to engage promptly with them when an issue of bullying comes to light, whether their child is the student being bullied or the one doing the bullying. We will ensure parents/carers are made aware of how to work with us on bullying and how they can seek help if a problem is not resolved. Some parents may need specific support to help deal with their child's behaviour. Where our school identifies that this is the case, we will initially provide support ourselves or signpost the parents to appropriate channels of help.

#### The School will:

- make sure that key information (including policies and named points of contact) about bullying is available to parents/carers.
- ensure that all parents/carers know who to contact if they are worried about bullying.
- ensure all parents/carers know about our complaints procedure and how to use it effectively.
- ensure all parents/carers know where to access independent advice about bullying.
- work with all parents/carers and the local community to address issues beyond the school gates that give rise to bullying.
- ensure that parents work with the school to role model positive behaviour for pupils, both on and offline.

Particularly during a lengthy investigation, or when there is a repetition of bullying behaviour, a target's parents may feel very anxious. It is very important that the investigator and the parents keep in contact but parents must understand that teaching staff do have other demands on their time. We will always endeavour to ring parents on the same day that the incident occurred; however, phone calls may not always be able to be made as soon or as frequently as the parent would ideally like.

#### All parents/carers should:

 Regularly remind their child of the school's expectations of behaviour as found in the school's Behaviour Policy. This will reinforce the aims of the school and minimise the chance of their child's involvement in bullying

- Be alert to signs that their child may be a victim of bullying. Such signs may include problems with attendance, illness, any unusual money requests, missing or damaged equipment and physical injuries
- Be aware of, monitor and control their child's use of social media
- If any parent/carer suspects that their child is being bullied, they are recommended to encourage their child to inform a member of staff.
- Contact the school directly if they feel that their child is subject to bullying. In the first instance, they should contact the appropriate Form Teacher or Head of House.
- If parents/carers feel that their concerns have not been fully dealt with they should report the matter, in writing, to the Headteacher. If this does not prove to be conclusive the Chair of Governors.

#### 14. Review and Evaluation

The Pastoral Team keep the effectiveness of this policy and the prevalence of bullying in the school under ongoing review as part of their cycle of regular meetings. This process of review includes a discussion of whether any patterns of bullying behaviour have emerged. The policy and its effectiveness are reviewed annually by Governors. The School Council and the Antibullying Ambassadors regularly discusses anti-bullying. Here, form representatives have the opportunity to voice any concerns on behalf of their fellow pupils. Whole School and Year Group assemblies are used to raise awareness on the issue, including cyber-bullying and the social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL).

#### Appendix 1

## Statement on bullying for display in classrooms at Merchant Taylors' School

Any member of the Merchant Taylors' Community, pupil, staff member or volunteer, has the right to learn and work without fear of being bullied. Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullies and their victims may be of any age, size or physical strength. Bullying can take many forms and includes such things as: name calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive or humiliating comments, gossiping, spreading hurtful or untruthful rumours, laughing or sniggering at someone in an unkind way, taking or deliberately damaging a person's belongings, threats and extortion, physical violence and intimidation, using body language inappropriately (e.g. giving 'dirty' looks or 'eye-rolling'), deliberately invading someone's personal space, producing offensive graffiti or writing unkind notes about someone, and cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying includes any of the above perpetrated via electronic or mobile devices, or when using social media. This also includes sending or displaying offensive or degrading images by phone or via email / the internet, and isolating or excluding people either socially or online.

#### Main points:

- When bullying has taken place, those who know of it, besides the bully and the pupil,
   will probably include other pupils and, possibly, parents
- It is vital that all who know of bullying should report it to a Tutor or any other member of staff who will, if they think fit, pass the information on to Heads House or, in serious cases, to the Head.
- The reporting of bullying, even anonymously, is by no means to be regarded as 'grassing' or 'snitching': it is absolutely and always the right thing to do. Indeed, it is a duty for every member of the School to be an upstander and a reporter.
- Bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at the School. This means that a bully can expect, as appropriate, advice, reprimand or punishment. Serious or persistent offence may incur suspension or expulsion.

• A concern for others lies at the heart of the School. Each and every one of us can help to create an atmosphere of friendly co-operation, respect and tolerance by refraining from bullying behaviours and by speaking out if we see it happening.

Please report any form of bullying to Your Form Tutor, Head of House, Assistant Head Pastoral or ANY member of staff

Appendix 2

### **Supporting Organisations and Guidance**

- Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- Beat Bullying: www.beatbullying.org
- Childline: www.childline.org.uk
- DfE: "Preventing and Tackling Bullying. Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies", and "Supporting children and young people who are bullied: advice for schools"
   March 2014: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying
- DfE: "No health without mental health":
   https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/no-health-without-mental-health-a-cross-government-outcomes-strategy
- Family Lives: www.familylives.org.uk
- Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk
- MindEd: www.minded.org.uk
- NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk
- PSHE Association: www.pshe-association.org.uk
- Restorative Justice Council: www.restorativejustice.org.uk
- The Diana Award: www.diana-award.org.uk
- Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk
- Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk
- Young Carers: www.youngcarers.net

#### Cyberbullying

- Childnet International: www.childnet.com
- Digizen: www.digizen.org
- Internet Watch Foundation: www.iwf.org.uk
- Think U Know: www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk

#### **LGBT**

EACH: www.eachaction.org.uk