Queen Elizabeth Grammar School

Document Reference	**QEGS Anti-Bullying Policy**
Version Number	V1.4
Author/Lead **Job Title**	Jim Palin Deputy Head
Consultation	Deborah Rogers, Y3 PSHEE Coordinator James Jones, Head of Y12 QEGS Head of Years QEGS Senior Leadership Team
Checker Person Name / Title **Quality Assurance**	 Penny Plumpton, Safeguarding Governor
Name of Approver / Committee **Date Approved**	QEGS GEC 22.02.2024
Date of Next Review (Annually)	**January 2025**

VALIDITY – Policies should be accessed via the Foundation intranet to ensure the current version is used.

CHANGE RECORD (Annually)

Version	Date	Change details
V1.0	Sept 2017	Policy Reviewed: James Tiffany
V1.1	Sept 2018	Policy Reviewed: James Tiffany
V1.2	Sept 2018	Policy updated after review: James Tiffany
V1.3	Jan 2022	Policy updated after review: James Tiffany
V1.4	Jan 2024	Policy adapted to through school: Jim Palin

To be published on the following:

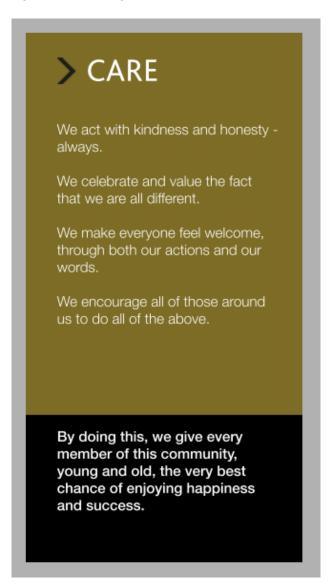|			
Staff shared	**X**	**School website**	**X**

QEGS Anti-Bullying Policy

1.   Introduction

Aims and Objectives

We pride ourselves on the relationships that exist at QEGS. Bullying, just like any other behaviour designed to offend or upset others, is unacceptable and will not be tolerated or ignored. Any member of the school community, pupil, employee or volunteer has the right to learn and work in a positive and constructive environment and without fear of being treated in a way that makes them feel unhappy or vulnerable. We recognise that unkindness or bullying may also occur outside of school hours but our position on this is clear in that our expectations of the way members of our community treat each other do not stop when the bell goes or at the school gates. This is made absolutely clear in the School Rules and in the programme that we deliver to all pupils that begins in Year 3 and continues right the way through into the Sixth Form.

Our opposition to bullying and all unkindness aimed at other members of the community is defined, quite clearly, in our fundamental School values, which begin with a clear and simple statement about "Care". This statement applies to everybody who is part of this community, whether they are pupils or staff.

> **CARE**

We act with kindness and honesty - always.

We celebrate and value the fact that we are all different.

We make everyone feel welcome, through both our actions and our words.

We encourage all of those around us to do all of the above.

By doing this, we give every member of this community, young and old, the very best chance of enjoying happiness and success.

The School will do what is reasonably practicable to eliminate bullying by:

● creating an environment and culture where all forms of poor behaviour towards others are not tolerated, not just bullying
● making sure that pupils, teachers and support staff are aware of these expectations
● demonstrating that the School takes bullying seriously and that it will not be tolerated
● taking measures to prevent all forms of bullying in and out of school
● supporting everyone, including investing in training and professional development, to make sure we can take action to identify and protect those who might be bullied
● demonstrating to all that the safety and happiness of pupils is enhanced by dealing positively with bullying
● promoting an environment where telling someone about bullying is seen as positive and necessary, not as causing trouble or "telling tales", and where pupils feel able to challenge poor attitudes to other children themselves
● promoting good behaviour, positive attitudes and in particular, kindness, tolerance and respect between pupils and staff
● treating bullying as a behaviour that, just like other poor behaviour, can be challenged and rectified. Identifying or labelling students as "bullies" or "victims" is unlikely to be helpful or assist in bringing about effective and long lasting change to behaviour patterns.

This policy refers to how QEGS will respond to a pupil being bullied by another pupil or group of pupils. The governing body values the good relationships fostered by the school, and expects that every allegation of bullying will be taken seriously. The governors believe that the Foundation should never accept bullying. All staff, pupils and parents should be aware of the negative effects that bullying can have on individuals and the school in general, and should work towards ensuring that pupils can learn in an environment without fear.

This policy was written in conjunction with the following documentation which all help to inform our overall strategy:

● *"The Use and Effectiveness of Anti-bullying Strategies in Schools": April 2011*
● *"Preventing and tackling bullying: Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies" March 2014*
● *"Preventing and tackling bullying - Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies" July 2017*
● *"Characteristics of Bullying Victims in Schools" – DFE Research report 2010*
● *"The Annual Bullying Survey 2016" – Ditch the Label*

The policy is available to parents from the [Foundation website](). It is also available by request from our school office or from the Governors' office.

1.1 Background

It is the right of every person to work in a school in which individuals are free from the anxiety and worry caused by bullying. We acknowledge our collective responsibility to create and maintain this positive environment and to provide support and protection for all those involved in bullying. We recognise that a whole school approach is the most effective way of addressing this issue. The issue of bullying will be addressed directly and indirectly by the curriculum and will be included in Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) lessons. Bullying incidents will be dealt with in an immediate, clear and fair manner, consistent with the agreed practice as identified below.

This policy implements the advice in the Department of Education document ["Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for School Leaders, Staff and Governing Bodies"]() July 2017.

The law states every school must have measures in place to prevent all forms of bullying:

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 provides that maintained schools must have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. These measures should be part of the school's behaviour policy which must be communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents.

The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014

The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 provide that the proprietor of an Academy or other independent school ensures that bullying at the school is prevented in so far as reasonable practicable, by the drawing up and implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy.

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 replaces previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. A key provision is a new public sector Equality Duty, which came into force on 5 April 2011. It replaces the three previous public sector equality duties for race, disability and gender, and covers age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Duty has three aims. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

● eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act.
● advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
● foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Safeguarding children and young people

When there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm' a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern under the Children Act 1989. Where this is the case, the school staff should discuss with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who will then assess the situation and may report their concerns to their local authority children's social care and work with them to take appropriate action. Full details can be found in Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

However, external support can be given to pupils whether or not it is deemed a child protection concern. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, schools may need to draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying. Full details can be found in **Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2023** and **Chapter 1 of Working Together to Safeguard Children, updated in December 2023.**

1.2   **Definition**

Department of Education Guidance defines bullying as "behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally." Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against an individual or particular groups, for example on grounds of race or culture, religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation or, for example, because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by

actual differences between children or perceived differences. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; teachers and schools have to make judgments about each specific case.

Bullying is not, by definition, the kind of isolated, one-off incidents or exchanges that can at times occur in a school environment, for example where children "fall out" after a disagreement because they have different views on something, or the day to day exchanges which at times can lead to young people using expressions or behaviour that can upset another, but where there is no deliberate, planned intent to cause upset, nor any repetitive pattern or history to the exchange. It is critical that, as part of the education we provide, we teach young people how to have confidence and be resilient and specifically how to deal with differences of opinion, occasional comments that are not well judged and, in the context of a busy and active boy's day school, strategies to manage pent-up emotional and physical aggression.

Equally, a critical part of the learning process as children grow up, in which we all have a role to play, is to make sure that differences of opinion or problems between individuals are managed properly as these early difficulties and one off exchanges can frequently become the basis on which increasingly a child becomes more and more isolated and ultimately unhappy. Whether this meets a threshold for "bullying" or not is not really relevant – we need to, wherever possible, challenge all negative behaviour towards others in our community and set the bar as high as it possibly can be in terms of the way we treat each other.

Bullying can be:

- related to one or more protected characteristics, eg race, religion or sexuality;
- relating to special educational needs (SEN) or disability;
- related to appearance or health conditions;

Bullying can take many forms, including verbal, physical and cyberbullying. Children can and do abuse other children. This is generally referred to as **child on child abuse** and can take many forms. This can include (but is not limited to) bullying (including cyberbullying); sexual violence and sexual harassment, physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexting and initiating/hazing type violence and rituals. The term peer on peer abuse is no longer used for a number of reasons, but one is that it implied children who abuse each other were of similar ages, but this is not always the case. Younger children can be, and are, abused by much older children. **Where the term "cyberbullying" is used in this policy, as a school we define this as "any form of bullying or harassment using technology".** This includes trolling, mobbing, stalking, grooming or any form of abuse online.

1.3   Bullying is morally wrong and for this reason QEGS will not accept it, nor will it allow lazy stereotypes, for example "boys being boys" or other such expressions to normalise or excuse what is simply deliberate and planned unkindness to others. Some schools use the phrase "zero tolerance" in relation to bullying but this is open to misinterpretation and is often linked to punishment and sanctions, rather than the schools attitude towards bullying. At QEGS we see bullying as a behaviour that is unacceptable but one that can, with education, support and the use of sanctions where necessary, be changed, as for other forms of unacceptable behaviour. Where this behaviour does not change, this may ultimately lead to a pupil being asked to leave the school.

Bullying undoubtedly has the potential to seriously damage individuals - both children and adults. The School therefore will do all it can to prevent it, by developing a School ethos and environment in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable, and where a sense of community,

tolerance and respect is promoted. Research points to a lot of bullying being missed by teachers in schools, and frequently sitting "under the radar", perhaps because it takes place out of sight away from lessons, or is not necessarily immediately obvious in classroom situations. It is therefore critical that our starting point is to create a positive environment where children and adults treat each other well, and where negative exchanges and behaviour such as excluding others socially is challenged long before it might sit under any definition of bullying.

1.4   The School aims to produce a happy, kind, safe and secure environment where all can learn and work without anxiety and where positive relationships form the basis for everything else that we do. EVERY adult and every child in our community has a role to play in this process.

1.5   This policy aims to ensure that a consistent and effective response at QEGS is made to any bullying incidents that may occur. We aim to make all members of our whole school community aware of our opposition to bullying and we make clear each person's responsibilities with regard to the eradication of bullying in our School. The policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Behaviour Policy (available on the website).

1.6   Signs of pupils being made to feel unhappy or bullied

Every child is different and it is important that all adults working with children keep an open mind. However, children who are being treated badly, or bullied, may typically show one or more of the following signs, but this list is not exhaustive and staff will use their experience.

- unwillingness to come to school
- anxiety
- failure to produce work or producing unusually poor work
- belongings frequently 'go missing' or are damaged
- being deliberately isolated or excluded in lessons (eg group work) or social situations
- changes to eating patterns/habits
- changes to established habits and routines (for example missing Music lessons)
- low levels of self confidence
- frequent visits to the Medical Room (School Nurse) or Counsellor
- unexplained cuts and bruises
- frequent absence
- choosing the company of adults rather than peers
- repressed body language or lack of eye contact
- difficulty in sleeping
- talking of suicide or running away from home or school

1.7   The role of "bystanders" in bullying and being unkind to others

The attitudes that all children have, and their values and approach to school life, are critical in helping to prevent children being exposed to unkindness and bullying. Typically, other people will be present when one child chooses to make another unhappy deliberately, whatever method they choose. Even online, even if not actually present, others will typically see what is happening. The subsequent reaction of other children, immediately, can be critical. Where a "bystander" (another pupil) challenges the behaviour of a child trying to upset somebody, this can have a very powerful and instant effect, both in the short term, but also how the person who is targeted feels about what has been done or said afterwards. It can mean the difference between dismissing what someone has said instantly, so it has little effect or lasting impact, in comparison to dwelling or worrying about it for a long period of time.

Where the "bystanders" amount to more than one person, their potential impact is greater. This means that our work in school, including PSHE and sectional or full school assemblies, will target both the unacceptable nature of being a perpetrator, but also the importance of not

being passive and allowing unkind behaviour to go unchallenged. Research shows that older children will find it easier to challenge the behaviour of others, so we focus this work on the role of the "bystander" in KS2 and KS3, but also develop the theme at KS4 in terms of wider social responsibility. In KS5 our expectation is that older pupils act as role models and actively challenge poor behaviour and promote positive behaviour. We operate programmes such as Senior Prefects, PSHE mentoring, vertical grouping in House and QEGS Enrichment and Development (QED) and we also encourage older boys to work with staff to lead activities. Older pupils also lead assemblies on aspects of bullying, including racism or homophobia.

1.8 Staff Training

Staff will be made aware of policy and procedural updates and legal responsibilities. This will be performed through a process of staff receiving hard copies of policy updates, information in staff briefings and specific training sessions. As part of the pastoral section of the staff induction programme, all staff are made aware of the Anti-Bullying policy and the associated processes. If appropriate we would invest in bringing in specialists to help all staff understand the needs of our pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities, and gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) pupils.

2. Guidance

2.1 This policy has regard to the Department of Education document providing guidance on the prevention of bullying: **"Safe to learn – Embedding anti-bullying work in schools"** and refers to both pupils and staff.

2.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with other related School and Foundation policies, such as:

- QEGS Behaviour Policy
- WGSF Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- WGSF ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- WGSF SEND Policy
- WGSF Equal Opportunities (Pupils) Policy
- WGSF Complaints Policy

3. Reporting of Incidents

3.1 Pupils are encouraged to tell an adult or another pupil they trust (e.g. a close friend, Senior Prefect, older pupil or form representative) if they are being bullied and if the bullying continues they must keep on letting people know.

3.2 All the staff in our School take all forms of bullying seriously and seek to prevent it from taking place. All members of staff are given guidance on how to react to and record allegations of bullying in addition to challenging any form of anti-social or negative behaviour. The recording of all allegations and incidents on CPOMS forms a critical part of the pastoral work of the school, both in terms of logging and responding to incidents but also in identifying patterns and themes and responding to them effectively. Staff are encouraged to implement the policy in all areas of school life and the policy applies equally to a school trip, or playing competitive team sports in the same way as it does in the classroom. Staff also need to be aware of WHAT the most likely forms of bullying are – statistically this points to name calling as one of the most common, followed by threats of violence of some kind, and then actual physical exchanges or social exclusion. The traditional images of the school bully and associated behaviour, for example extracting money or possessions from another pupil, do not feature as highly in recent research and this is important for all staff to understand in terms of what we are looking for. It is also important to consider WHEN in terms of the development of our pupils we are looking for it.

Statistically, we are likely to see most bullying at KS3, and also see patterns such as physical bullying decreasing with age, but name calling and cyberbullying increasing. For this reason, the ongoing and detailed reporting of all bullying, whether alleged or investigated and found to exist is reported in the annual safeguarding report, alongside any themes and appropriate actions taken in relation to these emerging themes. It is good to have data, but more important to act on it. One of the reasons that bullying decreases at QEGS as pupils move into KS4 and KS5 is, according to pupil voice, because they learn to be comfortable about who and what they are, rather than seeking to be popular or craving acceptance. This therefore forms an important part of the supportive work staff do with pupils during KS2 and KS3. **Self esteem is a key part of overall resilience and good mental health.**

3.3 Being able to identify bullying in school can, at times, present a real challenge and relies on a number of factors, but one of the key factors according to research is understanding what characteristics are likely to make a child more vulnerable, and what the risk factors are, in terms of being bullied. Therefore, we are committed to regular and high quality staff training to make sure that staff are well positioned to identify issues before they become more serious.

3.4 If a member of staff witnesses an act of bullying, they will either investigate it themselves or refer it to the appropriate Form Tutor/Head of Year/Head of Section or Senior Leadership Team member. Teachers and support staff, which may include the School Nurse, Learning Support staff or Counsellor, do all that they can to support the child who is being bullied. The parents of the bully and victim will be contacted at the appropriate stage by the member of staff dealing with the case. Pupils who have engaged in bullying behaviour will be subject to appropriate disciplinary sanction where this is deemed appropriate and will also, where possible, be supported in learning different ways of behaving and in re-establishing more positive relationships.

3.5 Pupils have the opportunity to tell us their views about a range of school issues, including bullying, in PSHE lessons, form tutor periods, interviews, as part of quality assurance procedures, pastoral feedback questionnaires and via the numerous school working parties set up to review policy or implement new ideas or strategies.

3.6 The law empowers members of the School staff to impose disciplinary penalties for inappropriate behaviour and this includes the regulation of behaviour of pupils when they are off the School site. This is of particular relevance to incidents of cyberbullying and specific reference is made to this in the School Rules given to all pupils each year.

4. Responding to Incidents of Bullying

4.1 When bullying is known to have taken place, the teacher will deal with the issue immediately either by tackling it directly or referring it to the pastoral team. This may involve counselling and support for the victim of the bullying, and punishment for the child who has carried out the bullying. The School is committed in the first instance, and where deemed appropriate, to a collaborative approach at the outset where children are encouraged to discuss the problem together to find a solution, rather than immediately looking to identify and punish a culprit – it is often the case that where these issues are resolved through the children involved taking some responsibility and understanding the consequences of their behaviour, the long term outcomes can be much improved and in particular repeat behaviour is often prevented.

This "restorative" work, if deemed appropriate, is facilitated by an experienced pastoral member of staff (usually the Head of Year or Head of Section) and with the agreement of the victim and perpetrator. Professional judgement is key in deciding when the time is right to apply more sanctions, but factors such as repeat behaviour, or bullying of a more serious or threatening nature, are likely to define the type of approach required. Situations where pupils treat each other badly, just like the children themselves, are rarely the same and it is important therefore that they are investigated thoroughly, and the route forward based on these findings,

rather than a set of fixed rules or sanctions. Any further action taken will always be in line with the School's Behaviour and Discipline Policy and in severe cases of persistent bullying may result in permanent exclusion from the School. This is very much the last resort but may be necessary in balancing a duty of care to an individual with the duty of care to the wider school community. Where a permanent exclusion is deemed necessary, there will be a right of appeal, and the pastoral team will work with the family to try to ensure that they are placed quickly in an alternative school.

4.2   As with any pastoral matter, notes of conversations between staff, pupils and parents will be taken and added to CPOMS, which then becomes an important tool in analysing behaviour by form, year or key stage, spotting patterns, and deciding on responses. This data also plays a key role in reviewing our schemes of work and content for PSHE, RSE and the assembly programme. We recognise that it is important to listen to children and respond to their views. A record of all bullying incidents is taken as part of the logging and recording of all parental contact in order to record and review individual cases and track trends. This parental contact information is kept by the respective HOY and shared, as appropriate, with other members of the pastoral team to ensure continuity of support as a child moves through school. We log all reported cases of bullying and allegations, not just cases that on investigation have been found to have some truth or substance and the annual safeguarding report to governors also shows the figures for previous years as a comparison.

4.3   All the schools within the Foundation are committed to the eradication of bullying. We therefore do all we can to prevent it by fostering a School ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable. Teachers use a range of age-appropriate methods to help prevent bullying and to establish a climate of trust and respect for all. Teachers also use praise to reward and celebrate the success of all children in a range of different contexts, thus creating a positive environment and a sense of community and pride. Rewards, we believe, are a key part of any anti-bullying policy as they promote the value of an individual within our community.

4.4   The School reviews the effectiveness of anti-bullying strategies. This includes consultation with the pupils in a range of different forums and ongoing analysis of parental contacts to improve and develop its practice. The Pastoral team and School Health Centre staff meet regularly to analyse pupil issues, and part of this work is identifying and responding to any themes or trends that develop in terms of behaviour and the pastoral issues being dealt with. Emerging trends will form a key part of, for example, the review of schemes of work in PSHE and the content of sectional and full school assemblies, so that our work is both reflective and reactive and focussed on need.

4.5   From the start of Year 3, are encouraged to behave towards each other with kindness and consideration. Pupils understand from a very early age why some forms of behaviour are unacceptable and hurtful to others and this is supported by their individual policies and schemes of work in place. To be effective, this requires consistent standards and approaches by all adults responsible for children.

5.   The Role of the Headteacher

5.1   To ensure that all staff implement the School Anti-Bullying strategy and that all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the School policy and know how to deal with incidents of bullying. The Head will report annually to the Governing Body about the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy. The Headteacher has designated the Deputy Headmaster (Pastoral) as the manager of the policy and the anti-bullying strategy on a day to day basis.

5.2   To ensure that all children know that bullying is wrong and that it is unacceptable behaviour in this School.

5.3   To ensure that all staff receive sufficient training and guidance to be equipped to deal with all incidents of bullying. This will include, but is not limited to, making sure that staff understand the policy and their role within it, supporting and promoting good mental health in pupils, and the technical awareness and associated management of cyber bullying.

The Head sets the climate of mutual support and praise for success, making bullying less likely. When children feel they are important and belong to a friendly and welcoming school, bullying is far less likely to be part of their behaviour.

6.   The Role of the Governors

6.1   The Governing Body supports the Head in promoting good behaviour; this includes an aspiration to completely eliminate bullying. It includes a review of strategies and policies in order to ensure the wellbeing of pupils. The Safeguarding Governor plays a key role in overseeing anti-bullying work in school through their regular meetings with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Where the school is dealing with serious cases, the DSL will liaise directly with the safeguarding governor and keep them informed. Governors also play a key part in scrutinising the safeguarding and pastoral reports provided in Governor Education Committee (GEC) meetings, the being "critical friends" through analysis of data and themes and associated in school responses. They also take the opportunity, whenever possible, to talk and listen to children when they are in school.

6.2   A parent who is dissatisfied with the way the School has dealt with a bullying incident can ask the Governing Body to look into the matter via the School's Complaints Procedure.

7.   The Role of Parents

7.1   Parents should be aware of the signs of bullying and should look for unusual behaviour in their children. For example they may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to their normal standard. Parents should understand that it is not their child's fault that they are being bullied. Equally, parents should be careful not to assume, immediately, that any negative exchange or difficulty with a relationship with another pupil at school is bullying or indeed that the fault lies automatically with "the other pupil/s" involved. They should also make sure their child is fully aware of the School procedures concerning bullying and that they must not be afraid to ask for help. In particular, they should consistently reinforce the importance of speaking to staff where they have concerns themselves or about others, and how telling the truth and being an "upstander" is important.

The following agencies are available for support and advice for parents and children

Bullying and cyberbullying | Childline

Kidscape (helpline 08451 20204)

Parentline Plus | DAD.info (helpline 08088 002222)

Several sites offer helpful advice to parents with respect to how they can best monitor their child's use of the computer at home.

DfE Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff

Cyberbullying.org

Childnet

Child Exploitation and Online Protection

7.2   Parents who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact an appropriate member of staff immediately: for example, the Form Tutor, Head of Year or Head of Section. If they are not satisfied with the response, having allowed time for that person to deal with the matter and respond, they should contact the Deputy Headmaster (Pastoral Care and Safeguarding) followed by the Head. If they remain dissatisfied, they should follow the Foundation's Complaints Policy.

7.3   Parents have a responsibility to support the School's Anti-Bullying Policy and to actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the School community.

7.4   Parents have a responsibility to manage the use of pupil's personal electronic devices and mobile phones so as to ensure that they have access only to age appropriate software, and applications.

7.5   Where parents are advised that their children have exhibited behaviour that involves being unkind to, or bullying, other children, they have a key role to play. There is clear evidence to support the idea that if eliminating bullying is about changing behaviour, then the most effective way to change behaviour is where the school and parents work together. It can be very hard to accept that your child has behaved in this way, but it is also important to understand that the school would not seek to identify the behaviour as a problem unless we are confident of the facts in front of us. Denial, or trying to shift or share blame, is an understandable reaction but it can stand in the way of moving forward and dealing with the key issues quickly. The school will not seek to permanently label children as "bullies" – instead we will try to deal with it as one type of unacceptable behaviour – a behaviour which can be changed with support and guidance.

8.   Cyberbullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual bullying', which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is when one person or a group of people try to threaten or embarrass someone else using a mobile phone or other hand held device (including the camera functionality) or the internet. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories, as people forward on content at a click. It needs to be taken seriously, not least because it is a type of bullying which can be impossible to escape from day or night (the "always on" generation…), in comparison to physical or face to face verbal bullying which requires the presence of another individual and is by definition limited to the times the victim is with the perpetrator of the bullying.

The most common forms of cyber-bullying involve the use of text or picture messages, instant messenger systems, email, abusive phone calls or posting comments on social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter. This list however is not exhaustive.

The wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 give teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying by providing a specific power to search for or confiscate, and if necessary delete inappropriate images or files from, electronic devices including mobile phones.

8.1   Definition

The definition of cyberbullying above applies equally to actions perpetrated using computers, mobile devices or electronic media. The following non-exhaustive list provides some

examples:

- bullying by text or voice messages or via calls on mobile phones
- use of mobile device cameras to humiliate, cause fear or distress or to film violent attacks
- posting threatening, abusive, and defamatory or humiliating material on websites or social networking sites
- hijacking email or social media accounts
- setting up false social networking profiles

See the Foundation's ICT Acceptable Use Policy for further information.

8.2   Cyberbullying and the law

The Communications Act 2003 makes it a criminal offence to send menacing and threatening communications and the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives Headteachers "to such an extent as is reasonable" the power to regulate the conduct of pupils when they are off site.

8.3   Prevention of cyberbullying

The School is committed to educating its pupils in the proper use of mobile devices and computers through ICT lessons, PSHE, whole school and sectional assemblies. This includes regular online safety year group talks to update pupils which include the consequences of misuse. Pastoral staff are trained to respond effectively to any allegations or reports of cyberbullying and have systems in place to respond to it. Within the pastoral team, designated specialists will train and update the rest of the team as appropriate, liaising with external agencies such as Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command (CEOP). The Online Safety guidance in the Foundation's ICT Acceptable Use Policy gives details on the blocking of access to inappropriate websites and pupils are bound by the School's Acceptable Use Policy when using the School's ICT facilities and mobile devices on the School site. Educationally, we will tackle cyber bullying in various contexts, but in particular we will identify the fact that a lot of cyber bullying takes place because the person carrying it out is not face to face with the other person, and this, whilst making it "easier", in many ways makes it more serious and certainly a behaviour with a cowardly element to it - even more so when the perpetrator hides behind anonymity.

8.4   The School reserves the right to take action against those who take part in cyberbullying. It will support those who are targeted and, when necessary, will work with the police to detect those involved in criminal acts. It will also use the full range of powers and sanctions to punish those who bully pupils or staff in this manner.

8.5   The role of "bystanders" in Cyberbullying

In cyberbullying, bystanders can easily become perpetrators – by passing on or showing to others images designed to humiliate, for example, or by taking part in online polls or discussion groups. They may not recognise themselves as participating in bullying, but their involvement compounds the misery for the person targeted. At QEGS we regard these 'bystanders' as 'accessories' who actively support cyberbullying and therefore may take action against them as well. It is important that students are aware that their actions may have severe and distressing consequences, and that participating in such activity will not be tolerated. Students are encouraged and expected to report incidents of cyberbullying.

8.6   Advice to pupils and parents

Pupils should report any suspected cyberbullying incident to the relevant member of staff in their School or to their parents. They should not answer abusive messages but log and report them. Messages should not be deleted. The School is committed to working with parents to ensure that all pupils are aware of the serious consequences of getting involved in anything

that might be seen to be identified as cyberbullying. Parents should avoid getting involved in online or electronic exchanges with other pupils on behalf of their children and should instead either seek advice from the school or one of the supporting organisations identified in section 7.1**.**

8.7   Advice to staff

If a member of staff suspects or is told about a cyberbullying incident they should ask the pupils to show him/her the mobile phone and note down the offending text message including the date and time. In the case of a computer, if possible, they should obtain a printed version of the material in question. They should inform the relevant senior pastoral member of staff and the Network Manager.

Teachers may become victims themselves of cyberbullying and should report any incidents immediately to the Deputy Headmaster. This will be treated in confidence and they will receive support including taking of any appropriate action against pupils. They should follow the advice laid out for pupils above.

Staff are educated on the acceptable use of School ICT resources and work in accordance with the [“Safer Working Practices”](#) document, updated February 2022, and the Foundation's Staff Code of Conduct.

9.   Bullying for Staff

9.1   The School is committed to the support of staff who may feel they are being bullied by pupils, parents or another colleague. Staff should approach their Line Manager in the first instance; if the source of the bullying is their Line Manager then they should approach a member of the Senior Management Team or the Head of HR and the issue will be dealt with in accordance with the School's policy. More specific guidance is provided in the **Bullying, Harassment and Victimisation at Work Policy**