

Ursuline College

Anti-Bullying Policy

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Author:	Z Cochrane	Owner:	Ursuline College
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Do something. Get Moving. Risk new things. Stick with it. - Our foundress, St Angela Merici

As a Catholic comprehensive school following the tradition of Ursuline education, we share a collective responsibility to ensure each student achieves their full potential.

In an atmosphere of mutual respect, trust and care we work together in the spirit of the Gospel to serve, walking alongside our young people to lead by example and instil values in them full of hope and understanding. Through encouragement, responsibility and self-discipline, we enable each individual to grow spiritually and intellectually, in an understanding that *better never stops* and in order to make a unique and positive contribution to society.

Working together to fulfil our potential academically, spiritually and socially. Respecting each other, helping each other and bearing with each other, because getting better never stops.

Statement of intent

Ursuline College is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all students, so they can learn in a secure and supportive atmosphere.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in our school. If bullying occurs, all pupils must feel confident to tell someone and know that their concern will be dealt with promptly, fairly and effectively.

We are a restorative school. This means we aim to resolve and reconcile situations by caring for the needs of everyone involved. This policy applies to all members of the school community — students, staff, parents and governors.

Separate procedures apply for allegations of bullying or harassment involving staff (see the school's Bullying and Harassment Policy for Employees).

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Policy aims

In accordance with Gospel values, we aim to:

- Establish Ursuline College as a place of safety and belonging, where difference and individuality are celebrated.
- Ensure every student feels safe, happy and valued.
- Clarify for students, staff and parents that bullying is always unacceptable and contrary to the dignity of the individual.
- Promote a restorative and educative approach to managing conflict and building positive relationships.
- Embed an anti-bullying culture across the curriculum, pastoral systems, and school community.

Policy objectives

- All members of the school community understand what bullying is and know what to do if it happens.
- All staff are familiar with this policy and follow it consistently.
- All pupils and parents know how to report bullying and understand that it will be taken seriously.
- Incidents are recorded, monitored and acted upon promptly to ensure patterns are identified and addressed.
- The school environment supports kindness, respect and equality in all interactions.

What is bullying?

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally, and which involves an imbalance of power. This imbalance of power may be real or perceived and can arise from physical strength, access to embarrassing or personal information, popularity or social status, the size or influence of a group, or the use of technology or social media. It may also emerge as "Language or behaviour described as banter, joking or part of a friendship will still be challenged where it is harmful, discriminatory, sexualised or intimidating."

It can also take the form of child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence), which may include verbal, physical, sexual, emotional or online elements. KCSIE 2026 makes clear that child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both the child who has experienced the reported bullying and the child alleged to have displayed bullying behaviour, is preventable, and that timely, evidence-based support can help prevent escalation into further abuse or violence. A single incident may not meet the definition of bullying but can still be extremely serious and will be addressed under the Behaviour and/or Safeguarding Policy.

Bullying can include (but is not limited to):

- Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting or intimidation.
- Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, or any use of violence, including serious physical harm or threats of harm with a weapon.
- Racist: racial taunts, graffiti or gestures.
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
- Homophobic, transphobic or biphobic: bullying based on gender identity or sexuality. Prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying incidents involving protected characteristics will be recorded and monitored so patterns can be identified.
- Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours or teasing.
- Cyber: misuse of social media, email, messaging, images or online spaces to intimidate or humiliate, including the use of AI-generated or digitally altered content (for example, deepfakes).
- Discriminatory: targeting someone due to race, gender, SEN, disability, religion or belief, appearance, or background, including racism, faith-targeted abuse, sexism and misogyny/misandry.
- Coercive: forcing another person to act against their will through intimidation or manipulation.
- Exclusion: deliberate isolation from groups, activities or friendship circles.

What is sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment includes unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, such as sexual comments, jokes, gestures, images, or physical contact. These incidents are treated seriously and investigated under safeguarding and behaviour procedures. Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) exists on a continuum and may escalate into sexual harassment or sexual violence; all signs, reports and concerns, including online incidents and the making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes (including AI-generated images), will be treated as safeguarding concerns in line with KCSIE 2026 Part Five.

How the School Will Respond to Bullying or Sexual Harassment

All members of the Ursuline College community — staff, students, parents, and visitors — are entitled to work and learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, and discrimination. Bullying and sexual harassment of any kind will not be tolerated.

Reporting Concerns

- Students who believe they are being bullied or harassed should report their concern as soon as possible to their Tutor, Head of House, Deputy Headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or any trusted adult.
- Parents or carers are encouraged to raise concerns directly with the House Team or school office.
- Staff who experience pupil/parent bullying or harassment of staff will also be addressed appropriately. Allegations against staff will be managed under the school's Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures, following the principles of natural justice and due process.

All reports will be taken seriously and handled sensitively, with appropriate confidentiality.

Investigation and Response

- All incidents will be investigated promptly, fairly, and in line with the Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, and KCSIE (2026).

- The investigation may involve gathering statements, reviewing CCTV (if available), and consulting parents or carers of those involved.
- Both victims and alleged perpetrators will receive appropriate safeguarding and pastoral support. Restorative dialogue will only be considered where appropriate, safe, and in the best interests of those involved.
- Where bullying or harassment is found to have occurred, appropriate action will be taken, which may include:
 - Restorative meetings or mediation
 - Pastoral or counselling support
 - Behaviour contracts or reflection work
 - Sanctions, up to and including suspension or exclusion, consistent with the Behaviour Policy
 - Referral to external agencies (e.g., Early Help, Police, Children's Social Care) where safeguarding concerns arise

Incidents Outside of School

Under Sections 90 and 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, school staff have the authority to discipline pupils for misbehaviour that occurs outside school premises if it is reasonable to do so.

This includes behaviour that:

- Occurs while travelling to or from school
- Takes place on school transport
- Takes the form of online bullying where this is continuous, rapidly shared and difficult for a pupil to escape, and therefore may require safeguarding intervention even where content was created outside school.
- Occurs in the local community where it impacts the welfare of a student or poses a threat to another pupil, causes harm, affects the orderly running of the school or adversely affects members of the school community.

Ursuline College will therefore investigate and, where appropriate, act upon incidents of bullying or harassment that take place outside school if they affect members of the school community or breach the school's values.

The school will also be alert to times when pupils may be at highest risk around the school day, including immediately after school.

Use of Mobile Phones and Electronic Devices

Under powers provided by the Education Act 2011 (amending the Education Act 1996), authorised school staff may confiscate and search electronic devices, such as mobile phones, if there is reasonable ground to suspect that the device contains material that breaches school rules or constitutes evidence of bullying, harassment, or a criminal offence. Searches/confiscation/examination of electronic devices will be conducted in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy, Mobile Phone Policy and DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance.

These actions will always be taken proportionately, with regard to safeguarding, privacy, and the school's Behaviour and Online Safety policies. In addition to this Years 7–11 mobile-phone breaches are managed under the school's separate Mobile Phone Policy. That keeps confiscation procedures consistent across your policies.

Legal Framework

This section is informed by:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Sections 89–91)
- Education Act 2011 (searching and confiscation powers)

- Equality Act 2010
- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2026)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for Schools (DfE, 2026)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2026), Part Five: Child-on-child sexual harassment and sexual violence

Why It's Important to Respond to Bullying

Bullying hurts. Every member of our community has the right to be treated with respect.

Those who experience bullying must be supported; those who bully must be helped to change their behaviour.

Schools have a legal and moral duty to act promptly and effectively to address bullying and ensure safety.

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that they are being bullied. Adults should be alert to possible indicators, which may include:

- Reluctance to attend school or certain lessons.
- Changes in behaviour, mood or achievement.
- Unexplained injuries or lost belongings.
- Avoidance of friends or social activities.
- Anxiety about using devices or social media.
- Becoming withdrawn, anxious or lacking confidence.

While these may suggest other issues, bullying should always be considered a possibility and investigated.

Procedures

1. Reporting:

- Students should report concerns to a trusted adult (e.g. Tutor, House Team, Pastoral Support, SLT, or Designated Safeguarding Lead).
- Parents are encouraged to contact the House Team or school office.
- Anonymous reporting options (e.g. email, online form, or pupil voice) are available.
- Staff witnessing or receiving reports must log incidents promptly using the school's behaviour recording system and, where there is a safeguarding concern or child-on-child abuse, report this to the DSL or a deputy without delay.

2. Recording:

- All incidents are logged on the school's system (BehaviourWatch for behaviour or bullying incidents and CPOMS where the matter constitutes or raises a safeguarding concern) and include a clear summary, actions taken, decisions made and the rationale for those decisions, and outcomes.
- Pastoral leaders and SLT monitor these records regularly to identify trends.

3. Investigation:

- The incident will be investigated promptly by the Head of House or designated pastoral lead.
- Where necessary, interviews will be held with students and witnesses.
- The wishes and feelings of the child reporting bullying will be considered when determining support and response, while explaining that the school may still need to act where safeguarding requires it.
- Parents/carers of the child who has experienced bullying behaviour and child alleged to have displayed bullying behaviour will normally be informed where appropriate, subject to safeguarding considerations and any advice from Children's Social Care or the Police.

- Deliberately fabricated allegations may be addressed under the Behaviour Policy, but a report that is unsubstantiated or cannot be proven is not automatically malicious. This is particularly important with safeguarding/sexual harassment reports.

4. Response:

Ursuline College uses a Restorative Approach, aiming to repair relationships and build understanding. Where behaviour constitutes or may constitute child-on-child abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment or sexual violence, safeguarding procedures will take precedence and the response will be child-centred and risk-assessed. Responses may include:

- A restorative meeting between parties (where safe and appropriate).
- Support from counsellors, ELSA, pastoral assistants or mentors.
- Behaviour interventions or reflection sessions.
- Sanctions, in line with the Behaviour Policy.
- Further Intimidation, retaliation or bullying following a report will itself be treated seriously.
- Referral to external agencies (e.g. Early Help, CAMHS, Police) if required.

5. Follow-up:

- Both victim and child alleged to have displayed bullying behaviour will be monitored by House Team within a week and continues monitoring where necessary.
- Monitoring will include BehaviourWatch logs, safeguarding logs, pupil voice and parent feedback to include patterns or repeated behaviours, not incidents in isolation.
- Records of meetings, actions and outcomes will be securely stored.
- Any repeat incidents will trigger escalation to SLT.

Outcomes

- The bullying behaviour will be addressed, and a restorative or disciplinary response applied.
- Both victim and child alleged to have displayed bullying behaviour will receive support to understand underlying factors and provide intervention alongside appropriate sanctions.
- Parents will be kept informed throughout and the school will communicate the actions it can appropriately share, while respecting confidentiality regarding sanctions or personal information concerning another pupil.
- In serious or repeated cases, suspension/permanent exclusion will be considered in accordance with the Behaviour Policy and KCSP Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy
- All incidents will be reviewed to identify lessons learned and inform practice.

Prevention

Ursuline College takes a whole-school approach to preventing bullying through:

- Regular PSHE/Skills for Life lessons and assemblies on respect, diversity, online safety and relationships.
- Staff training on recognising, preventing and responding to bullying and child-on-child abuse, including early indicators of risk and the importance of challenging abusive behaviour rather than dismissing it as “banter”.
- Student voice and peer mentoring programmes.
- Clear supervision in social areas and safe spaces for vulnerable pupils, including consideration of times when pupils may be at highest risk around the school day (for example, immediately after school).
- Collaboration between pastoral teams, counsellors, ELSA and external agencies.
- Themed events (e.g. Anti-Bullying Week, Internet Safety Day).
- Reinforcing positive behaviour through the Behaviour Policy and Serviam values.
- Behaviour for Learning Policy and SEN Policy.

Monitoring and Review

The Senior Leadership Team, in consultation with the Local Governance Committee, will review this policy annually, or sooner if national guidance changes.

Monitoring will include analysis of behaviour logs, safeguarding records where appropriate, student voice, and parent feedback to ensure continuous improvement.