Cothill House Policy Documents

ISSR 10 Anti-Bullying Policy

NMS for Boarding: 16.1, 16.2, 16.3

Date: June 2024
Next review: July 2025

At Prep Schools Trust, our community is based upon respect, good manners and fair play. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so that every one of our pupils can develop to their full potential. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed, but orderly atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other, inside and outside of school.

Prep Schools Trust prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting the Trust Schools in maintaining high standards of behaviour both at school, online and at home, and that the Trust Schools cooperate closely together.

Bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination of pupils or staff will not be tolerated by the Trust or any of its Schools. We treat all of our pupils and their parents fairly, and with consideration and we expect them to respect the staff, the School, the Trust and each other, in return. All forms of bullying are unacceptable at any of our Schools (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying and sexualised bullying). Any instances of bullying will be recorded and, where appropriate, will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Trust's disciplinary procedures or the School's Behaviour Management Policy.

WHAT IS BULLYING

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Put another way, bullying is intentionally hurting, harming or humiliating another person. It may take many forms, including physical (including any threat of or use of violence of any kind, initiating ceremonies), sexual (including the sharing of nudes/semi-nudes, sexualised banter or harassment), verbal (including racist or other derogatory language directed at peers, cyberbullying via text messages, email, social media, gaming, or other instant messages, and can include the use of images and video), and/or emotional (including by excluding, being sarcastic, name-calling, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone, or actions that fall short of direct participation, where someone encourages others to bully, or joins in with laughing at a victim. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidating, and often involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator(s) and the victim(s) whether that be a physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), or intellectual imbalance, or by the perpetrator(s) having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate the victim(s).

Bullying can sometimes amount to child on child abuse, which is defined as abuse by one or more pupils against another pupil. It can be standalone or as part of wider abuse and can happen both inside and outside of school, and online.

Bullying is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, and may involve actions or comments regarding a person's race, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, special education needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain health conditions, or because of a child's familial circumstances, such as they are adopted, in care or that they have caring responsibilities. Bullying may be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. For example, bullying can still be homophobic if directed towards a child that is perceived to be gay, whether or not this is the case.

Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time and can involve anyone - pupils, other young people, staff, and parents.

We always take bullying very seriously. It conflicts sharply with the Trust's social and moral principles, and potentially with its policy on equality and therefore, will not be tolerated.

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously the Trust and its schools' first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; teachers and schools have to make their own judgements about each specific case. Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), deriving from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online. Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can in itself have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as banter or horseplay it can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviour. Early intervention can help to set clear expectations of the behaviour that is and isn't acceptable and help stop negative behaviours escalating.

The Trust and its schools recognise that children with SEND or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges and may be more vulnerable to child on child group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children. The Trust also recognises that pupils who board face increased risks of physical or emotional harm through bullying as the perpetrator has round the clock opportunities to bully the victim.

Bullying is extremely serious and can cause huge distress and potentially long term psychological damage to the victims. Bullying on the basis of protected characteristics is taken very seriously. Pupils who are victims of bullying will always be supported and will be reassured that they will be kept safe. Pupils who have engaged in bullying will be subject to appropriate disciplinary sanctions and will also, where possible be supported in learning different ways of behaving and offered support for their own circumstances, where appropriate.

Bullying which occurs outside school premises or online

School staff members have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises or online. This may include bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre. Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The Head will also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a pupil. While school staff members have the power to discipline pupils for bullying that occurs outside school, they can only impose the disciplinary sanction and implement that sanction on the school premises or when the pupil is under the lawful control of school staff, for instance on a school trip.

Bullying and Child Protection

Abuse of children from other children will result in a referral being made to the Local Authority social care. There may be instances when a bullying issue becomes a Child Protection issue and the sanctions in place for bullying would no longer apply, eg. Sexting (see below for 'Cyberbullying'), child on child abuse, sexual violence or harassment or sharing of nude and/or semi-nude images, whether consensually or not (see Safeguarding Policy). Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, the school 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 doing the bullying.

A bullying incident will be treated as a child protection concern whether there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

RECOGNISING BULLYING

- Pupils who bully others are not always easily recognised. There are no recognisable stereotypes. Bullies can also be victims and require appropriate support. This may involve being referred to the school counsellor.
- Bullies may have assertive, aggressive attitudes over which they exercise little control.
- Bullies tend to lack empathy; they cannot imagine what the victim feels.
- Bullies tend to lack guilt: they rationalise that the victim somehow "deserves" the bullying treatment.
- It is difficult to get the real facts about who bullies.
- Staff must be aware of children that tease others and share a laugh, often at others' expense. What could be construed as banter, can often escalate into bullying and also child-on-child abuse.
- All staff must ensure that they monitor and report any unsatisfactory behaviour of children, especially towards vulnerable children, as the school may then be able to identify a trend of repeated behaviour.

- It is imperative that the staff are vigilant and sensitive to those that are more vulnerable than others and stop any unwanted behaviour before it escalates.

RECOGNISING THE VICTIMS

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied or is vulnerable to being bullied include:

- are new to the class, dormitory or school
- are different in appearance, speech or background from others
- suffer from low esteem
- are children with SEND
- demonstrate 'entertaining' reactions when being bullied. e.g. loss of control
- are nervous or anxious
- are targeted because of prejudice against protected characteristics (age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation)
- lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) pupils.

Vulnerability is not always visible to adults. The victim may look like any other child.

PROCEDURES - WHAT TO DO

Our Schools recognise that pupils are likely to report bullying to someone they trust; therefore this could be any member of staff. The Schools also recognise that children may not find it easy to tell staff about bullying verbally and that instead they may show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice and react to. All staff will be trained in noticing bullying and/or handling an allegation. In the case of allegations, they will be aware that they must listen to the pupil, not ask leading questions and make a written record of the allegation to the best of their ability.

- Take action as quickly as possible. We have a duty of care to all the children at the school so that we can have a community which feels safe all the time.
- There may be times when an incident needs to be investigated and a number of children may be spoken to depending on the circumstances.
- Reassure the victim(s), that you are going to help and inform him/her and their parents of the proposed course of action.
- Inform the Headmaster & DSL by logging a CPOMS incident
- Senior staff will then follow the procedures (outlined below) of dealing with an alleged incident of bullying. Records are kept to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach or to enable patterns to be identified through regular scrutiny of pastoral and behaviour logs.

Recording procedures and response to bullying incidents

The log of a bullying incident via CPOMS records dates of specific incidents of alleged bullying including those who were involved and who was responsible for bringing the incident(s) to light. In addition the following should be included :

- A description of the nature of the alleged bullying incident.
- Whether or not the incident of bullying was related to a protected characteristic.

- Suggested steps to be taken in the investigation of the alleged incident of bullying to identify those involved, including parents.
- Whether or not the incident of bullying is a Child Protection issue? Y/N Give reasons for your decision.
- Findings of the investigation into the alleged incident of bullying.
- Have any sanctions been imposed in line with the school's Behaviour Policy
- Particular consideration will be paid to the fact that as a full boarding school, victims of bullying within the school are unable to escape from the perpetrator. A risk assessment may need to be completed to assess the need to separate pupils in either classrooms or dormitories following an incident of bullying.
- Further monitoring of the alleged incident of bullying.
- If the incident has been resolved, ensure that a follow-up meeting is held and that the child / children / adult involved are monitored to ensure that:
    - the incident is not repeated
    - the issue has been resolved
    - the victim and perpetrator have received an appropriate level of support.

PREVENTION

The school's response to bullying does not start at the point at which a child has been bullied. We strive for a culture of listening to children and a culture where children feel supported to talk about concerns knowing that they will be taken seriously and kept safe. The curriculum includes PSHE and RSE teaching which educate pupils about behavioural expectations and that bullying is unacceptable. School staff proactively listen to children and gather intelligence through the pastoral system about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict and develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place. This might involve talking to pupils about issues of difference, perhaps in lessons, through dedicated events or projects, or through assemblies. Staff themselves will be able to determine what will work best for their pupils, depending on the particular issues they need to address.

An ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat one another and the school staff with respect will enable pupils to make the right decisions. That culture extends beyond the classroom to the corridors, the dining hall, the playground, and beyond the school gates including travel to and from school. Values of respect for staff and other pupils, an understanding of the value of education, and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others permeate the whole school environment and are reinforced by staff and older pupils who set a good example to the rest.

The school regularly communicates with parents to ensure that they are clear that the school does not tolerate bullying and are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being bullied. Parents should feel confident that the school will take any complaint about bullying seriously and resolve the issue in a way that protects the child, and they reinforce the value of good behaviour at home.

It is important that pupils and parents understand the school's approach and are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders.

The school will:

- regularly evaluate and update its approach to take account of developments in technology, for instance updating ‘acceptable use’ policies for computers;
- implement disciplinary sanctions. The consequences of bullying reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see that bullying is unacceptable. The school will consider the use of strong sanctions such as exclusion in cases of severe and/or persistent bullying.
- openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related difference. Also children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities. The school teaches children that using any prejudice based language is unacceptable. This is enforced via the PSHE/RSE curriculum in each year group.
- use specific organisations or resources for help with particular problems.
- provide effective staff training. Anti-bullying policies are most effective when all school staff understand the principles and purpose of the school’s policy, its legal responsibilities regarding bullying, how to resolve problems, and where to seek support. Training should help staff understand the needs of their pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGB&T) pupils.
- work with the wider community such as the police and children’s services to agree a clearly understood approach to cases where bullying is particularly serious or persistent and where a criminal offence may have been committed.
- ensure that pupils know how to report concerns and make it easy for them to do so, so that they are assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted on. Pupils should feel that they can report bullying which may have occurred outside school including cyber-bullying;
- create an inclusive environment where pupils can openly discuss the cause of their bullying, without fear of further bullying or discrimination
- celebrate success. Celebrating success is an important way of creating a positive school ethos around the issue.

CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying can be defined as *“the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others”.* It is an aggressive, intentional act often carried out repeatedly over time and often against a victim who cannot easily defend themself. Our Schools acknowledge that cyberbullying may take place inside and outside of School and at any time of the day.

Cyberbullying includes:

- sending threatening or abusive text messages;
- creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos; (including nude or semi-nude images);
- 'trolling' - the sending of menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games;
- excluding children from online games, activities or friendship groups;

- setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child;
- encouraging young people to self-harm
- voting for or against someone in an abusive poll
- creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name
- sending explicit messages, also known as sexting
- pressuring children into sending sexual images or engaging in sexual conversations.

The DSL has overall responsibility for online safety within the school which involves active management of hardware, software and connectivity. However, vigilance of staff and parents has a part to play in the safeguarding and protection of pupils. The DSL will ensure that information is provided on staying safe online in all areas of the school and the DSL will also provide clear guidance on the use of electronic devices within the school.

Guidance for Staff

Staff should:

- during induction, all new members of staff are given training and guidance on the anti-bullying policy and how to react to and record allegations of bullying including cyberbullying. Trust schools will ensure that all staff understand the principles of the policy, the School's legal responsibilities, actions to be taken to resolve and prevent incidents of bullying and also details of further support;
- not leave a computer or any other device logged in when you are away from your desk. Enabling a PIN or passcode is an important step to protect you from losing personal data and images (or having them copied and shared) from your mobile phone or device if it is lost, stolen, or accessed by pupils;
- familiarise themselves with the privacy and security settings of the social media and apps they use and ensure they are kept up to date;
- keep a check on their online presence;
- be aware that their reputation could be harmed by what others share about you online, such as friends tagging you in inappropriate posts, photographs, or videos;
- consider their own conduct online; certain behaviour could breach the Staff Code of Conduct;
- not accept friend requests from pupils past or present. If you feel this is necessary, you should first seek guidance from a senior manager;
- not give out personal contact details – if pupils need to contact you with regard to homework or exams, always use your school's contact details. On school trips, staff should have a school mobile phone rather than having to rely on their own;
- complete regular training in online safety as part of their CPD in order to keep up with legislation as well as technological developments.

Guidance for Pupils

Pupils receive clear guidance on e-safety and the safe use of technology. It is taught in computing lessons and through the PSHE curriculum as well as through visiting speakers. This is to help build resilience in pupils of all ages to protect themselves and their peers through education and information. Similarly, the school has a duty to educate the parents in matters of online safety and as such, regular newsletters are sent home as well as

invitations to hear some visiting speakers. All pupils and staff will sign up to the 'ICT Acceptable Use' policy' agreement with the school.

Pupils must never:

- share their passwords with anyone else
- use another person's password
- send or take part in writing any text, or prepare any graphics, or create audio/video material which may be unkind, offensive, abusive, obscene or defamatory; This is a criminal act, as is sharing nudes or semi-nudes of yourself or others, whether with their permission or not.
- download games to the network
- send an email that contains rude, abusive or offensive language
- give out personal details online
- believe everything they read on the internet
- never attempt to deliberately search for any information that might contain rude, offensive, or abusive, language or pictures
- do not sign up to any chat, email groups or social networking sites.

If pupils feel uncomfortable about something they have experienced online, they must immediately inform an adult. If they are not comfortable telling someone they know, they can contact Childline at http://www.childline.org.uk or 0800 1111.

How cyberbullying issues are managed

Cyberbullying will be dealt with following the procedures and reporting system outlined in this policy and following appropriate sanctions outlined in the Behaviour policy. In the first instance, a pupil may be suspended from the computer system pending investigation. For serious breaches of online safety of a harmful nature, the DSL may make a referral to CEOP or the LCSP. Some cyberbullying actions, including the distribution of pornographic images, are criminal offences and must be referred to the police.

Any instances of cyberbullying which may occur in the holidays when pupils may have more freedom in their use of technologies, will still be dealt with in accordance with sanctions outlined in the Behaviour policy.

Although cyberbullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are however criminal laws that may apply to communications of a harassing or threatening manner or the unauthorised publication of private messages, upskirting, sharing nudes/semi-nudes and sexting. Where the School considers that a reported incident of cyberbullying may amount to a criminal offence, it will inform the Police.

Technical provision

The school's internet is filtered using an approved, filtered internet Service (*Go Guardian*), which complies with current statutory requirements (EIS), and any unwanted traffic going in or out of the system is alerted to the system administrators.

Personal electronic data is managed in line with statutory requirements, although inappropriate material from an individual's account will be flagged up by the school's filtering system.

Pupils have restricted access to personal electronic devices. For further information, please refer to the *Specific Items Policy*.

In response to allegations of cyberbullying, certain staff are permitted to conduct a search for electronic devices, such as a pupil's mobile phone, with the authority of the Head. Staff do not require the consent of the pupil, or their parents to undertake a search, provided they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil is in possession of a prohibited item, or an item that has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence, or to cause personal injury to any person (including the pupil being searched) or cause damage to property, and provided they have the Head's prior consent to undertake a search.

Where a search finds an electronic device that is prohibited by School rules, or where the member of staff undertaking the search reasonably suspects that the electronic device has been or is likely to be, used to commit an offence or cause personal injury or damage to property, the School may examine any data or files on the device, where there is good reason to do so, for example where there has been an allegation of cyberbullying. Parental consent to search through electronic devices is not required but they will be informed after the event unless doing so presents a further risk to any child.

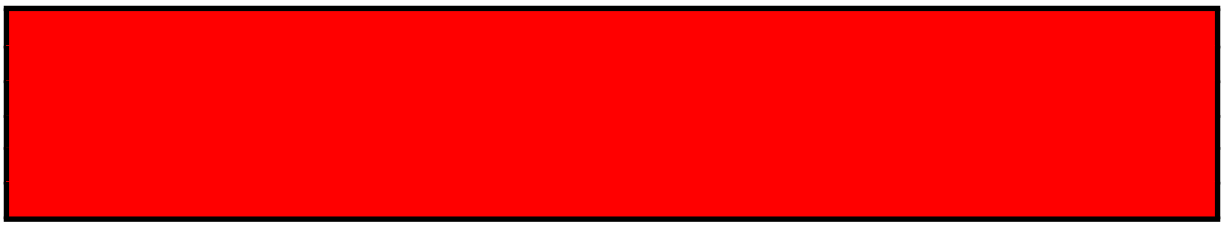
The School will keep a record of all searches carried out, including the results of any search, and the actions taken following that search.

For further information, please refer to the DfE advice Preventing and Tackling Bullying July 2017 and Cyberbullying: advice for headteachers and school staff (2014)

The Disciplinary Scale

See the *Behaviour Policy* for the graduated list of sanctions.

Annex A - Anti-Bullying Policy (for the children)



Q. What is bullying?
A. Words or actions that are intended to hurt.
Sometimes children don't realise when a joke goes too far. What seems like 'banter' is actually bullying if the person feels humiliated or the teasing has really upset them.

Physical
Bullying can be **physical**…

hitting
kicking
punching
biting
Pinching

Cyberbullying

- Bullying can be done using **modern technology.**
- **Cyberbullying** can be carried out using:
    - Emails
    - Social network sites
    - Mobile phones
    - Text Messages
    - Instant messenger and chatrooms
    - Interactive gaming
    - and sending viruses
- Cyberbullying is when one person or a group of people aim to threaten, tease or embarrass someone else by using a mobile phone, the internet or other technologies. This can happen in term time or the holidays but you must always tell an adult.

Sexting

- When people talk about sexting, they usually mean sending and receiving:
    - naked pictures or 'nudes' or 'semi-nudes'
    - 'underwear shots'
    - sexual or 'dirty pics'
    - rude text messages or videos.
- They can be sent to or from a friend, boyfriend, girlfriend or someone you've met online.
- Sexting can easily happen. Things can go wrong – even when you didn't mean for them to.
- Sexting is against the law and if it ever happens to you or someone you know, then you must tell an adult immediately.
- Sexting is **against the law** and if it ever happens to you or someone you know, then you **must** tell an adult immediately.

Child-on-child abuse
This is a difficult one to understand as all friendships have times when things go wrong. However, if an older child picks on a younger child, this could be seen as more than just bullying given the difference in age, size, ability etc. Also, it is more than just bullying if someone has repeatedly intended to harm someone else. For example, de-bagging (pulling down someone else's trousers), touching or grabbing their private parts are all kinds of child-on-child abuse. There is **zero tolerance** for child-on-child abuse.

-

Sexual violence
Inappropriate sexual violence or harassment (unwanted attention) can occur between two children of any age and sex.

Words
Bullies can also use words to tease and hurt someone's feelings, by saying something about:

- How they look
- Their religion, nationality, family and friends
- Their ability in the classroom, on stage or on the sportsfield
- Their intelligence
- How they behave

Bullies may hide
Bullies may hide people's books, pens, shoes - or any other belongings - in order to make them upset or to get them into trouble.

Bullies exclude people
and encourage others to do the same.

- They may leave people out of games or refuse to share a book or a seat.
- They might refuse to clear a plate or lend a pencil.
- Deliberately ignoring someone can be bullying.

Q. How do bullies act?
Bullies act alone or sometimes in groups.

- Bullies often get others to do their bullying for them; they have the ideas, but don't want to be caught bullying.
- Be careful that you aren't manipulated or encouraged (willingly or unwillingly) to tease someone or be unkind to someone.

Q. What do bullies look like?
They come in all shapes and sizes. **They look like you or me.**

- They can be
    - all ages
    - Pupils and girls
    - men and women
- Bullies are not always obvious. Sometimes they appear to be popular.
- Bullies like having power over people.

Q. What do I do if I see someone being bullied?

- Tell an adult – even if it is during the holidays or away from school.
- Support him/her - don't only help your friends or someone in your class but support all those that you think are being bullied, even those you may not like.
- Don't be a bystander. It's almost as bad as being a bully. Bullies will carry on unless they are stopped, so tell an adult about it.

Q. How do I support someone who is being bullied?

1. Tell an adult.
2. Be kind to the person that is being bullied.

Don't ignore bullying even if it doesn't involve you.
Watching someone being bullied and doing nothing is unkind.
You really should tell someone if you think that someone is being bullied.

Q. What do I do if I am being bullied?
Tell someone you trust…….

- ✔ a friend
- ✔ your Form Teacher
- ✔ any member of staff
- ✔ The Designated Safeguarding Lead
- ✔ The Head
- ✔ Your houseparents
- ✔ Phone Childline (0800 1111)
- ✔ Phone the Children's Commissioner 020 7783 8330
- ✔ your parents

Q. What will the School do if I am being bullied?
The School will support you.

- The teachers will support you, care for you and do everything that they can to help you, and stop the bullying from happening.
- If necessary, the bully's parents will be asked to meet the Head to discuss the problem. The Head will meet with you and together, will speak to your parents.
- The School will listen to all concerns and worries about being bullied and will view your situation very seriously.
- If the bullying does not stop after efforts have been made to stop it, the bully can expect to receive an appropriate sanction.
- Sometimes there are actions when bullying changes into abuse, for example sexting and child on child abuse. The Head and DSL may have to contact social services and the police.

Further help and information can be found online, including at:

Childline	*https://www.childline.org.uk*	0800 1111
The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA)	*http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk*	
The NSPCC	*https://www.nspcc.org.uk*	0808 800 5000
Kidscape	*https://www.kidscape.org.uk*	020 7730 3300

BULLYING

words or actions used to hurt someone

Bullying includes **pushing**, hitting, kicking & **punching**

Bullies tease by saying **hurtful** things

Bullies leave people out of their games

Bullies like having **power** over **people**

Bullies scare by shouting or **threatening**

Bullies can act alone but **often** have a group of friends

DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS BEING **BULLIED?**

DON'T KEEP IT TO YOURSELF

TELL

AN ADULT

NOW

YOU **KNOW** BULLYING IS WRONG

~ What do I do if I am being bullied? ~

Tell an adult. You know bullying is wrong, so telling an adult is not sneaking. The adult will take you seriously and will help you.