Anti – bullying Policy

Procedure Owner:	Polaris Education
Approved by:	Managing Director
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Version No:	04
Associated Documents:	This policy should be read alongside all other relevant policies, procedures and guidance documents, including: Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Trauma Informed Relationship and Behaviour Policy Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

All group companies are detailed in the current legal structure.
This policy forms part of the Group Quality Management system ISO 9001.

Legal Framework

This policy has been developed with regard to:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2015)
- Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (as amended)

The school recognises its duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and to provide a learning environment that is safe, inclusive and free from bullying, discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The school acknowledges that bullying may constitute a safeguarding concern and will be addressed in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures where appropriate.

Vision Statement

We are committed to providing a safe, inclusive and respectful environment where all pupils feel valued, supported and able to achieve their potential. Positive behaviour and effective anti-bullying practice are fundamental to promoting pupils' safety, wellbeing and emotional development and therefore have a significant impact on learning and achievement.

The prevention of bullying remains a key priority for the school and is regularly monitored by senior leaders. Through continued vigilance, education and partnership working, we aim to ensure that our school remains a happy, welcoming and supportive environment for all members of the school community.

Statement of intent – Our Aims

- To work together as a school community to create a safe, inclusive and supportive environment in which all pupils can learn, develop and thrive.
- To be an organisation that demonstrates in its practice its commitment to equality of opportunity for all.
- To promote a culture of respect, kindness and belonging where bullying is not tolerated.
- To recognise that bullying can have a significant impact on a child's emotional wellbeing, mental health, attendance, attainment and overall welfare.
- To adopt a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse. Bullying, sexual harassment, sexual violence and other forms of abuse will never be dismissed as banter, harmless fun, part of growing up or boys being boys.

Schools are required under the Education Act, to be responsible for maintaining acceptable standards of discipline and behaviour and for regulating the conduct of their pupils. Embodied in our school aims is the intention to create a school environment where bullying has no place and where children are safe and happy.

Key Principles

- To accept that all schools can have incidents of bullying and that as an effective caring school we need a consistent set of strategies to deal with them.
- We have a duty to tackle bullying in school as it affects children's welfare, happiness, self-esteem, confidence and ultimately educational achievement.
- Action against bullying must be seen as part of the school's approach to promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural welfare of the children and developing the school's partnership with the wider community.
- All reports of bullying will be taken seriously, investigated appropriately and responded to in a timely and proportionate manner.
- Bullying may, in some circumstances, constitute a safeguarding concern and will be managed in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures where appropriate.

Roles and Responsibilities

The DSL (Head of Education) is responsible for:

- Monitoring reported incidents of bullying and suspected bullying
- Ensuring appropriate safeguarding responses are implemented where required
- Analysing trends, patterns and emerging concerns
- Reporting significant concerns to senior leaders and, where appropriate, external agencies
- Ensuring the effective implementation of this policy and overseeing all concerns relating to bullying
- Supporting staff in responding to incidents and promoting best practice

The DSL and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) at each school are responsible for ensuring adherence to this policy and for overseeing the school's response to bullying concerns.

Staff will receive regular guidance and training to help them identify, prevent, record and respond appropriately to bullying behaviour.

All staff have a responsibility to challenge bullying behaviour, promote positive relationships and act promptly when concerns are identified or reported. Staff must follow the school's recording and reporting procedures and take appropriate action to prevent bullying from recurring.

Pupils are encouraged to contribute to a culture in which bullying is not tolerated, concerns are reported, and all members of the school community are treated with dignity and respect.

Staff and pupils work together to promote an environment in which diversity is valued and differences are respected. Pupils will be supported to understand that comments, jokes or behaviour intended as humour may nevertheless cause offence, distress or harm to others and are therefore not acceptable.

Parents and carers are encouraged to work in partnership with the school, raise concerns promptly, and support interventions aimed at resolving bullying incidents and promoting positive relationships.

Definition of bullying behaviour

Bullying is the repeated, deliberate action by one person or a group of people against an individual or a group of people which hurts (physically or emotionally) or seeks to humiliate them. The act can be verbal, physical, or involve behaviours which make the victim feel intimidated.

Bullying is typically characterised by an imbalance of power between the person displaying the behaviour and the person experiencing it, making it difficult for the victim to defend themselves

The school recognises that some pupils may experience difficulties with social communication, emotional regulation, or understanding the impact of their actions on others. These factors will be considered carefully when incidents are investigated. However, all pupils have the right to feel safe, respected and supported, and any behaviour that causes harm or distress will be addressed appropriately.

Types of Bullying

There are various types of bullying, but most have three things in common:

- It is deliberately hurtful behaviour.
- It is repeated over time.
- There is an imbalance of power, which makes it hard for those being bullied to defend themselves.

Bullying may take various forms, including:

- Physical - e.g. kicking, hitting, pushing, intimidating behaviour or interference with personal property.
- Verbal/psychological -e.g. threats, taunts, shunning/ostracism, name calling/verbal abuse or spreading of rumours, verbal, written, online or text abuse or ridicule.

- Racial - e.g. physical, verbal, written, online or text abuse or ridicule based on differences of race, colour, ethnicity, nationality, culture or language.
- Faith based bullying - e.g. negative stereotyping, name calling or ridiculing based on religion.
- Sexist bullying - e.g. use of sexist language or negative stereotyping based on gender.
- Misogynistic and Misandrist Behaviour - e.g. discriminatory, degrading, hostile or prejudicial attitudes, comments or behaviours directed towards pupils because they are male or female. Such behaviours may contribute to bullying, harassment or abuse and will be challenged appropriately.
- Sexual Bullying e.g. unwanted or inappropriate physical contact, sexual comments, sexualised language, sexual innuendo, online sexual harassment or the sharing of sexual images.
- Homophobic bullying - e.g. negative stereotyping, innuendo, name calling or ridiculing based on sexual orientation or the use of homophobic language.
- Transphobic Bullying - e.g. negative stereotyping, ridicule, exclusion, name calling or discrimination based upon a person's gender identity or gender reassignment.
- SEN/Disability bullying - e.g. excluding from activity, negative stereotyping, innuendo, name calling or ridiculing based on disability or learning difficulties.

Bullying related to ability, attainment, or perceived difference

This may include negative stereotyping, exclusion, ostracism, negative peer pressure, name-calling, or ridicule directed at an individual because of their academic ability, learning needs, attainment, effort, interests, appearance, family circumstances, or any other perceived difference.

It is important to recognise that all pupils attending our school have Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND). Many pupils experience social, emotional and/or mental health difficulties, and some may find social interaction and communication challenging. As a result, a pupil may engage in behaviour that causes distress to others without intending to do so.

When considering incidents, the school will take account of the pupil's level of understanding, intent, and individual needs before determining whether behaviour constitutes bullying. Where a pupil is considered not to have the understanding or intent required for their behaviour to be classified as bullying, the school will nevertheless take appropriate action to address the behaviour and support all pupils involved. This will include providing support to the pupil whose behaviour caused distress and to the pupil affected by it, with the aim of preventing further harm, promoting understanding, and developing positive relationships and behaviours.

Given that bullying can take many forms, it is important not to have a stereotypical image of a bully.

Some children may appear to provoke negative responses from others through their own behaviour. However, this does not justify bullying, and all members of our school

community are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect and to be protected from bullying.

It is recognised that, on rare occasions, a member of staff may be the victim of bullying by pupils, colleagues, parents/carers, or other members of the school community. Any such incidents will be addressed in accordance with this policy and other relevant school procedures.

All members of the school community, including pupils, parents/carers, teaching staff, support staff, and governors, should understand that bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All reported incidents will be taken seriously and dealt with appropriately.

Protected Characteristics

The school will not tolerate bullying related to any protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. This includes bullying associated with:

- Disability
- Race or ethnicity
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity

All allegations of prejudice-based bullying will be taken seriously, investigated appropriately, and recorded in accordance with school procedures.

The school will monitor incidents involving prejudice-based bullying, discriminatory language, and harassment to identify patterns, inform preventative measures, and promote a safe and inclusive environment for all members of the school community.

The school recognises that bullying may occur because an individual is perceived as different in some way. Any bullying related to a protected characteristic, special educational need, disability, appearance, ability, family circumstance, socioeconomic background, or any other actual or perceived difference will be taken seriously and addressed promptly.

Reporting and recording bullying

All staff should be proactive in promoting a positive school ethos in which respectful behaviour is modelled, encouraged, recognised and rewarded.

Pupils should be regularly reminded to report any concerns, worries or difficulties to a member of staff. This includes concerns relating to online behaviour, social media, messaging platforms, gaming platforms, and incidents of cyberbullying. The school will ensure that reporting systems are well promoted, accessible and age appropriate. Pupils

may report concerns to any trusted member of staff, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), pastoral staff, or through any other reporting mechanisms established by the school.

Pupils should also be encouraged to report any difficulties experienced during breaktimes, lunchtimes or other unstructured parts of the school day to a member of staff as soon as possible after the incident occurs.

Many incidents involving disagreements or relationship difficulties can be resolved through discussion and restorative approaches. It is important that all pupils involved are given the opportunity to explain their perspective and that staff adopt a supportive, solution-focused and problem-solving approach rather than an interrogative or accusatory one.

Staff who witness, receive a report of, or intervene in an incident of bullying or suspected bullying should record the concern using the school's agreed recording procedures. This enables incidents to be monitored effectively and helps identify patterns, trends and the support need of individual pupils.

All reports of bullying will be reviewed, recorded and monitored by the Pastoral Lead. Any incident that raises a safeguarding concern will be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and managed in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Records will include:

- Date and location of the incident
- Individuals involved
- Nature and type of bullying
- Any protected characteristic or prejudice-based element involved
- Actions taken
- Outcomes achieved
- Follow-up support provided

Bullying records will be reviewed regularly by senior leaders to identify patterns, emerging concerns and opportunities for preventative action. Where patterns are identified, appropriate interventions, staff training, pupil support and curriculum activities will be implemented to address the concerns and promote a positive school culture.

Serious incidents involving significant harm, threats, safeguarding concerns, or damage to people or property must be brought to the attention of a senior member of staff immediately.

Parents/carers of pupils involved in serious, repeated or substantiated incidents of bullying will be informed and involved, as appropriate, in supporting interventions and agreed outcomes. Parents and carers should feel confident that they can raise concerns with the school at any time. The school will take all concerns seriously, investigate them appropriately and respond as promptly as possible. Concerns will be acknowledged promptly and investigated in a timely manner. Parents and carers will be kept informed of

progress and outcomes, where appropriate, while respecting the confidentiality and welfare of all pupils involved.

Safeguarding Considerations

Bullying may constitute a safeguarding concern and, in some circumstances, may be considered a form of child-on-child abuse. The school recognises that child-on-child abuse can occur both inside and outside of school and may take place even where no concerns have been reported. Children may not always recognise abusive behaviour or feel able to report it.

Incidents involving prejudice-based abuse, discriminatory behaviour, sexual harassment, sexual violence, harmful sexual behaviour, online abuse, coercive behaviour, threats, exploitation, or behaviour that results in significant emotional harm will be considered and managed in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

Any concerns that meet the threshold for safeguarding intervention will be referred promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Where appropriate, referrals may also be made to external agencies, including Children's Social Care, the Police, or other relevant services.

All concerns will be recorded, risk assessed where necessary and managed in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Responding to bullying

Any sanctions or interventions imposed in response to bullying behaviour will take account of the needs of the pupil experiencing bullying, the needs of the pupil displaying the behaviour, the age and understanding of those involved, any identified SEND, and the nature, severity and context of the incident. The school's response will be proportionate and aimed at preventing further bullying while supporting all pupils involved.

Support for Victims

Support may include:

- Access to a trusted adult
- Pastoral support and intervention
- Restorative meetings, where appropriate and with the agreement of those involved
- Emotional wellbeing support
- Mental health support, where required
- Assessment of risk relating to self-harm or suicidal ideation, where concerns are identified
- Increased supervision and monitoring
- Opportunities to develop confidence, resilience and positive peer relationships
- Regular review meetings

- Safety and support plans, where required
- Adjustments to routines, seating arrangements, timetables or school activities, where appropriate to ensure the pupil feels safe
- Referral to internal or external support services, where appropriate

Support for Pupils Displaying Bullying Behaviour

The school will seek to understand the factors contributing to bullying behaviour and will provide appropriate support, intervention and education. Responses to bullying incidents will be proportionate, restorative where appropriate, and aimed at preventing recurrence, promoting positive relationships, and safeguarding the wellbeing of all those involved.

Where bullying behaviour meets the threshold of a safeguarding concern, the matter will be managed in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Support and intervention may include:

- Behaviour support plans
- Therapeutic support or intervention
- Social skills development
- Restorative practice, where appropriate
- Targeted work relating to empathy, relationships and respectful behaviour
- Emotional wellbeing support
- Mentoring or pastoral support
- Individual targets and regular review meetings
- Referral to internal or external specialist services, where appropriate

Reference should be made to the school's Trauma Informed Relationship and Behaviour Policy and the guidance contained within the Staff Handbook regarding appropriate interventions, consequences and support strategies.

Time should be taken to ensure that all parties are listened to, their views are considered, and appropriate support is provided following any incident. Follow-up discussions and review meetings may be arranged to monitor progress, evaluate the effectiveness of interventions, and ensure that concerns have been addressed.

All parties will be informed that there will be ongoing monitoring and support from relevant staff. This may include involvement from the Head of Education, Pastoral Team, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), and other appropriate professionals where necessary.

Strategies for preventing bullying

The most effective protection against bullying is a school culture in which all aspects of school life operate in a safe, orderly and supportive manner.

By promoting, encouraging and rewarding positive, respectful and cooperative behaviour, the school seeks to create an environment in which bullying is less likely to occur and cannot thrive.

Curriculum

Reference should be made to the school's curriculum and policies relating to Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) Education, Citizenship and Religious Education. These areas support the development of positive relationships, empathy, respect for others, resilience, assertiveness and an understanding of individual rights and responsibilities.

Teaching includes education about protected characteristics and supports pupils to understand, respect and celebrate diversity. The curriculum promotes positive attitudes towards people of different backgrounds, faiths, cultures, ethnicities, sexes, sexual orientations and gender identities.

Pupils and staff work together to promote a culture in which bullying is not tolerated, concerns are reported, and issues are addressed promptly and appropriately.

The PSHE curriculum promotes positive relationships, emotional wellbeing, online safety, respect, inclusion and anti-bullying messages throughout the year. This includes planned learning activities and resources linked to Anti-Bullying Week.

Reference should also be made to the school's schemes of work for ASDAN, PSHE and Religious Education, which provide opportunities for pupils to learn about a range of cultures, beliefs and communities, and to develop acceptance, respect and tolerance towards others.

Assemblies and Tutor Time

Through tutor sessions, assemblies and pastoral activities, pupils will be regularly reminded of the school's expectations regarding positive behaviour, respectful relationships and anti-bullying. These sessions provide opportunities for discussion, reflection and the reinforcement of key messages about kindness, inclusion and respect.

Anti-Bullying Week

While the school's commitment to preventing bullying is embedded throughout the year, this work is given additional focus during Anti-Bullying Week through a range of cross-curricular activities and awareness-raising opportunities.

Throughout the year, pupils are also encouraged to contribute to anti-bullying initiatives through student voice activities, surveys, assemblies, campaigns and other opportunities to promote a positive and inclusive school culture.

Online Safety and Cyberbullying

The school recognises that bullying can take place through technology and online platforms. Pupils will be taught how to stay safe online and how to report concerns relating to cyberbullying through the school's curriculum, assemblies, tutor sessions and pastoral support systems.

Bullying that occurs outside of school, including through social media, messaging platforms, gaming platforms, email or other online activity, will be investigated where it impacts upon the wellbeing, safety or education of members of the school community. This includes the inappropriate sharing of images; the consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images (including AI-generated images); online misogyny; online harassment; impersonation; exclusion from online groups; coercive behaviour; and sexually abusive online behaviour.

Pupils will be supported to develop safe, respectful and responsible online behaviours through the curriculum, assemblies and pastoral support. All concerns relating to online bullying or online abuse will be taken seriously and responded to appropriately.

Where online incidents raise safeguarding concerns, they will be managed in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as appropriate.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

The school values positive partnerships with parents and carers and recognises the important role they play in promoting pupils' wellbeing, safety and development.

Parents and carers are encouraged to raise any concerns regarding their child's welfare, relationships or experiences at school as soon as possible. Concerns relating to bullying will be taken seriously and investigated appropriately.

Annual review meetings, EHCP reviews, parental consultations and other planned meetings provide opportunities to discuss a child's progress, wellbeing, social development and any

emerging concerns. However, parents and carers should not feel they need to wait for these meetings to raise concerns. The school operates an open and supportive approach to communication and aims to work collaboratively with parents and carers to resolve concerns and support positive outcomes for pupils.

Parents and carers will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of bullying investigations where appropriate, whilst maintaining the confidentiality and welfare of all individuals involved. Where parents or carers remain dissatisfied with the outcome of a bullying investigation, they may raise their concerns through the school's Complaints Procedure.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Many pupils attending the school experience difficulties with social interaction, communication, emotional regulation and understanding social norms. As a result, some pupils may unintentionally cause upset or distress to others through their words or actions and may require support to understand the impact of their behaviour.

It is important that incidents are considered in the context of an individual's SEND and stage of development. When responding to incidents, staff will take account of the pupil's level of understanding, communication needs, intent and individual circumstances, whilst ensuring that any pupil who has experienced harm, distress or bullying receives appropriate support and protection.

Where behaviour is not considered to constitute bullying due to a lack of understanding or intent, the school will nevertheless take appropriate action to address the behaviour, prevent further distress and support all pupils involved.

The school will work with pupils to develop understanding, empathy, positive relationships, communication skills and appropriate social interaction. Support and interventions will be tailored to individual needs and may involve pastoral staff, specialist professionals, families and external agencies where appropriate. All pupils have the right to feel safe, respected, valued and supported within the school environment.

Consultation and Participation

The school is committed to ensuring that the views of staff, pupils, parents/carers and other stakeholders are considered when developing, reviewing and evaluating this policy.

In reviewing this policy, staff, pupils and parents/carers were given opportunities to contribute their views, experiences and suggestions regarding bullying and the school's approach to prevention and response. Pupils and parents/carers contributed through questionnaires, surveys, discussions and other feedback activities.

Where appropriate, the School Council contributed to the development of the policy and the consideration of feedback received from pupils. Staff, pupils and parents/carers were consulted on the definition of bullying used within this policy and on approaches to preventing and responding to bullying within the school community.

The school will continue to seek feedback from staff, pupils, parents/carers and other stakeholders to support the ongoing review, development and effectiveness of its anti-bullying practice.

This policy is published on the school's website and is available to parents/carers on request.

Monitoring and Review

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through:

- Analysis of bullying incident records
- Behaviour, safeguarding and wellbeing data
- Attendance information
- Pupil voice activities
- Parent/carer feedback
- Staff observations and feedback
- Review of trends and patterns by senior leaders and, where appropriate, governors/proprietors

The school will use this information to evaluate the effectiveness of its anti-bullying practice, identify emerging concerns and inform any necessary improvements to policy, practice, training or curriculum provision.

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if changes in legislation, statutory guidance, safeguarding requirements or school practice make this necessary.

Review Dates

Date:	**Version:**	**Summary of changes:**
September 2023	01	Initial update
September 2024	02	Annual review and update
September 2025	03	Updated in line with KCSIE 2025
August 2026	04	Updated in line with KCSIE 2026