

Anti-Bullying Policy



This policy was approved and ratified by the Governing Body of Altwood Church of England School on

Approved: Janice McLucas, Chair of Governors Date: Sep 2022

Approved: Neil Dimbleby, Headteacher Date: Sep 2022

This policy will be reviewed if there is a need for information to be updated.

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1 Statement of intent

We want to help all students live by the tenet of John 10:10 - 'Live life in all its fullness'. Therefore, all students are entitled to learn in a safe and supportive environment, and this intrinsically means being free from bullying. This section of the Behaviour for Learning Policy details how allegations and instances of bullying are dealt with, including measures to prevent bullying. These strategies aim to promote an inclusive, tolerant and supportive ethos at the school.

Legislation outlines several legal obligations regarding the school's response to bullying including (but not limited to):-

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- Communications Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Education Act 2011
- DfE (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying'
- DfE (2021) 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education 2022'
- DfE (2020) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'

Under section 89 of The Education and Inspections Act, schools must have measures in place to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst students. These measures are part of the school's Behaviour for Learning Policy, which is communicated to all students, school staff and parents.

All staff, parents and students work together to prevent and reduce any instances of bullying at the school. There is a zero-tolerance policy for bullying at the school.

2 Definitions

"Bullying" is defined in the school as ***persistent behaviour by an individual or group with the intention of verbally, physically, or emotionally harming another person or group***. It is generally characterised by:-

- **Repetition:** Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over an extended period of time
- **Intent:** The perpetrator means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental
- **Targeting:** Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group
- **Power imbalance:** Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations

Vulnerable students are more likely to be the targets of bullying due to the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves. Vulnerable students may include, but are not limited to:-

- Students who are adopted
- Students experiencing a particular health condition
- Students with caring responsibilities
- Students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds

Certain characteristics, traits or interests can also lead to students becoming targets for bullying, including, but not limited to:-

- Sex / gender
- Religion
- Race and ethnicity
- Language, dialect or accent
- Academic and / or sporting or cultural gift and ability
- Students who are or perceived to be LGBTQ+
- Students with SEND
- Appearance
- Home life
- Culture

Allegations of bullying will be investigated fully whenever there is a perception within an alleged victim of bullying having taken place. This does not necessarily mean that the school will agree that bullying has taken place. As with all matters of alleged challenging behaviour, the school will make its decision based on the balance of probability. Support will be available for the alleged victim whether the allegation is considered substantiated or not.

All staff, parents and students work together to prevent and reduce any instances of bullying at the school. Bullying is not tolerated at the school and education and, potentially, sanction will be used to minimise it.

3 Types of bullying

Many kinds of behaviour can be considered bullying, for example repeated teasing or taunting.

Bullying is acted out through the following media:-

- Verbal
- Physical
- Emotional
- Written
- Online (cyberbullying)

Racist bullying: Bullying another person based on their ethnic background or skin colour. It is a criminal offence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Public Order Act 1986.

Homophobic and biphobic bullying: Bullying another person because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

Transphobic bullying: Bullying based on another person's perceived gender identity or gender presentation.

Sexist bullying: Bullying based on sexist attitudes expressed in a way to demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Sexist bullying may sometimes be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviours.

Sexual bullying: Bullying behaviour that has a physical, psychological, verbal or non-verbal sexual dimension or dynamic that subordinates, humiliates or intimidates another person. This is commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes, sexualised behaviour and potentially negative gender stereotypes.

Ableist bullying: Bullying behaviour that focuses on another person's disability or support needs; this can include mocking the individual's disability or their needs, using derogatory words or slurs in relation to an individual's disability, or deliberately excluding an individual because of their disability.

Prejudicial bullying: Bullying based on prejudices directed towards specific characteristics or experiences, e.g. religion or mental health issues.

Relational bullying: Bullying that primarily constitutes of excluding, isolating and ostracising someone.

Socio-economic bullying: Bullying based on prejudices against the perceived social status of the victim, including, but not limited to, their economic status, their parents' occupations, their health or nutrition level, or the perceived "quality" of their clothing or belongings.

4 Roles and responsibilities

The **Board of governors** is responsible for:-

- Evaluating and reviewing this policy to ensure it does not discriminate against any students on the basis of their protected characteristics or backgrounds
- Overall implementation and monitoring of this policy
- Ensuring the school adopts an inclusive, tolerant and open-minded policy towards difference
- Analysing bullying data to establish patterns and reviewing this policy in light of these
- Appointing a safeguarding link governor who will work with the DSL and Behaviour Lead to ensure the policies and practices relating to safeguarding, including the prevention of cyberbullying, are implemented effectively

The **Senior Leadership Team**, ultimately under the Headteacher and via the DSL and Behaviour Lead is responsible for:-

- Reviewing and amending this policy, accounting for new legislation and government guidance, and using staff experience of dealing with bullying incidents in previous years to maintain high standards, keep bullying levels as low as possible, and improve procedures where possible
- Keeping a record of all reported allegations of bullying, including action taken and which type of bullying has occurred, to facilitate effective analysis of the data collected
- Analysing the data in the bullying record at regular intervals to identify trends, so appropriate measures can be formulated to tackle them
- Arranging appropriate training for members of staff to prevent and

Heads of House are responsible for:-

- Implementation of support, interventions and sanctions, including with parents where necessary
- Communication with parents of all students involved in the alleged bullying
- Being open to hear allegations of bullying, and escalating as appropriate

Teachers are responsible for:-

- Being alert to potential bullying in their classes, in and out of school when pertaining to an Altwood student
- Being available for students and other members of the community who wish to report bullying
- Providing follow-up support after bullying incidents as determined by SLT and / or Head(s) of House
- Being alert to possible bullying situations, particularly exclusion from friendship groups, and informing the student's Heads of House of such observations.
- Refraining from stereotyping when dealing with bullying.
- Understanding the composition of student groups, showing sensitivity to those who have been the victims of bullying.
- Reporting any instances of bullying they have either witnessed or had reported to them in the agreed method

The Inclusion Team, including Behaviour Mentor and Student Engagement co-ordinator are responsible for:-

- Offering emotional support to victims of bullying
- Resourcing further support as needed
- Alerting the relevant Heads of House regarding any incidents of bullying

Parents are responsible for:-

- Informing their child's Head of House or form tutor if they have any concerns that their child is the victim of bullying or involving in bullying in anyway
- Being watchful of their child's behaviour, attitude and characteristics and informing the relevant staff members of any changes

Students are responsible for:-

- Informing a member of staff if they witness bullying or are a victim of bullying
- Not making counter-threats if they are victims of bullying
- Walking away from dangerous situations and avoiding involving other students in incidents
- Keeping evidence of cyberbullying and informing a member of staff should they fall victim to cyberbullying
- Treating all members of the school community with respect

5 Statutory implications

The school understands that, under the Equality Act 2010, it has a responsibility 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.

The school understands that, under the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998, it is highly important to take bullying seriously. The headteacher will ensure that this policy complies with the HRA; the headteacher understands that they cannot do this without fully involving their teaching staff.

Although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, some types of harassment, threatening behaviour and/or communications may be considered criminal offences:

- Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to electronically communicate with another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or in a way which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or contains information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by means of a public electronic communications network, a message, or other matter, that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information through any media, including internet sites.
- Other forms of bullying which are illegal and should be reported to the police include violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation, and hate crimes.

6 Prevention

The school will remind all students of the importance of respect between all members of its community; bullying will be referred to within that remit.

Bullying will be discussed as part of the RSE and Health Education curriculum, in line with the RSE and Health Education Policy.

Opportunities to extend friendship groups and interactive skills will be provided through participation in special events, e.g. induction, House events and sporting activities.

Seating plans will be utilised to help to prevent instances of bullying.

Staff are on duty before school, during morning break, at lunch time and after school. A safe place, supervised by a teacher, can be available for students to go to during free time if they feel threatened or wish to be alone. Speaking to students in these situations will be key to the school's ethos of support for all members of the community. Form tutors will be open to students to discuss any bullying, whether they are victims or have witnessed an incident.

Before a new student joins the school, particularly when this happens in-year, the student's form tutor, potentially SENDCo and DSL team will implement a strategy to prevent bullying from happening – this will include a meeting with a senior member of staff as part of the process, a meeting with the Pupil Progress Champion shortly before their start date, buddies being identified by relevant Head of House and Tutor, and buddies collecting new student on their first day. Head of House will co-ordinate a check-up within the new student's first 6 weeks to monitor a positive settling in.

The school will be alert to, and address, any mental health and wellbeing issues amongst students, as these can be a cause, or a result, of bullying behaviour.

The school will do its best to ensure potential perpetrators are given support as required.

7 Signs of bullying

Staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a student is a victim of bullying:-

- Being frightened to travel to or from school
- School refusal
- Lack of confidence
- Anxiety
- Unsubstantiated medical complaints
- Deterioration in E4L
- Deterioration in academic performance and / or progress
- Damage to and / or missing clothes and / or possessions
- Asking for extra money or stealing
- Cuts or bruises
- Lack of appetite
- Unwillingness to use the internet or mobile devices at home
- Lack of eye contact
- Becoming short tempered
- Change in behaviour and attitude at school and / or home

It is of course possible that the signs outlined above may present but not be linked to bullying. Staff's investigation and knowledge of the child and their particular context will be crucial in helping to identify possible bullying.

Staff will be aware of the potential factors that may indicate a student is likely to exhibit bullying behaviours, including, but not limited to, the following:-

- They have experienced mental health problems, which have led to them becoming more easily aggravated
- They have been the victim of abuse
- Their academic performance has started to fall
- Bereavement
- Change in home circumstances e.g. parental separation, house move
- They are showing signs of stress
- Change in friendship group

If staff become aware of any factors that could lead to bullying behaviours, they will notify the student's form tutor, who will investigate the matter and monitor the situation.

8 Staff principles

The school will ensure that prevention is a prominent aspect of its anti-bullying provision.

Bullying is a safeguarding matter, and therefore many of the same considerations for all students will be in place with regard to bullying, including but not limited to:-

- Keeping the alleged victim at the centre of investigations and actions
- Being mindful that vulnerable children are at greater risk because there may be barriers to communication and societally they are less likely to be believed
- Just because a previous allegation has not been substantiated does not mean this allegation is not true
- Swift and effective communication and record keeping are key to an effective culture and provision

Staff will treat each report of bullying seriously and will not ignore signs of suspected bullying. Staff will act immediately when they become aware of a bullying incident. Unpleasant or disrespectful behaviour from one student towards another will be challenged.

Staff will always respect students' privacy, and information will only be shared with those who need to know to protect the young person from harm, and resolve the matter.

Follow-up support will be given to both the victim and perpetrator following an incident to minimise the chances of repeat behaviour.

9 Peer-on-peer abuse

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of peer-on-peer abuse, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

To prevent peer-on-peer abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, the school will educate students about abuse, its forms, and the importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others through the curriculum, assemblies and PSHE, RSE and Health Education lessons, in line with the Prevention section 17.5 of this policy.

Staff must challenge peer-on-peer abuse when they become aware of it. Staff will also be aware that peer-on-peer abuse can be manifested in many ways, including sexting, sexual harassment and assault, and hazing or initiation-type violence.

Students will be made aware of how to raise concerns or make a report and how any reports will be handled on a regular basis. This includes the process for reporting concerns about friends or peers.

10 Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can take many forms and can go even further than face-to-face bullying by targeting out of school time, activities and life, and can target more than one person. It can also take place across age groups and target students, staff and others, and may take place inside school, within the wider community, at home or when travelling. It can sometimes draw bystanders into being accessories.

Cyberbullying can include the following:-

- Threatening, intimidating, explicit, or upsetting text messages
- Threatening, explicit, or embarrassing pictures and video clips
- Disclosure of private sexual photographs or videos with the intent to cause distress
- Silent or abusive phone calls
- Using the victim's phone, email or social media profiles to harass others, to make them think the victim is responsible
- Threatening or bullying emails, potentially sent using a pseudonym or someone else's name
- Menacing or upsetting responses and / or messages to someone in a chatroom or messaging service
- Unpleasant or defamatory information posted to blogs, personal websites and social networking sites, e.g. Facebook

The above list is not exhaustive, and cyberbullying may take other forms.

All members of staff will receive training on a regular basis on the signs of cyberbullying, in order to identify students who may be experiencing issues and intervene effectively.

Staff will also be alert to the following signs which may indicate that a student is cyberbullying others:-

- Avoiding using the computer or turning off the screen when someone is near
- Acting in a secretive manner when using the computer
- Wanting to spending excessive amounts of time on the computer or mobile phone
- Becoming upset or angry when the computer or mobile phone is taken away

Parents will also be encouraged to engage in regular updates and training sessions in order to educate them on the signs and symptoms of cyberbullying, and will be advised to report to the respective form tutor or Head of House if their child displays any of the signs outlined in this section.

Staff will be aware that a cyberbullying incident might include features different to other forms of bullying, prompting a particular response. Significant differences may include the following:-

- **More extensive scale and scope** – students may be bullied on multiple platforms and with multiple different methods
- **Anytime and anywhere nature of cyberbullying** – students may not have an escape from the torment when they are at home due to the bullying continuing through technology at all times
- **Anonymous bullies** – it is easy for individuals to remain anonymous online and on social media, and students may be bullied by someone who is concealing their identity
- **Lack of awareness by bullies** – sometimes, the culture of social media, and the inability to see the impact that words are having on someone, may lead to students crossing boundaries without realising, making this an even greater risk than other forms of bullying
- **The victim of the bullying may have evidence of what has happened** – students may have taken screenshots of bullying, or there may be a digital footprint that can identify the bully

In accordance with the Education Act 2011, the school has the right to examine and delete files from students' personal devices, e.g. mobiles phones, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone. In these cases, the school's Searching, Screening and Confiscation procedures will be followed at all times.

11 Procedures

Minor incidents will be reported to the victim's form tutor and / or Head of House, who will investigate the incident, set appropriate sanctions for the bully if substantiated, and keep the Head of House up to date. Restorative work between the respective students will also be employed to reduce the risk of any repeat.

When investigating a bullying incident, the following procedures will be adopted:-

- The victim, alleged perpetrator and witnesses are interviewed separately, with written statements of their evidence collated; if the alleged perpetrator refuses to write a statement this will be noted, if the alleged victim and witnesses refuse to write a statement, this may delay the commencement and completion of the investigation
- Members of staff will try to ensure that there is no contact between the students being interviewed, including electronic communication
- If a student is injured, staff will arrange for appropriate medical intervention and advice
- A room is used that allows for privacy during interviews
- First hand witnesses will be interviewed where possible
- The pastoral team will gather evidence of a cyberbullying incident; this may involve text messages, emails, photos, etc. provided by the victim
- Premature assumptions are not made, and decisions on interventions, support and sanctions will be made once the evidence has been collated
- Members of staff listen carefully to all accounts, being non-confrontational and not assigning blame until the investigation is complete
- All students involved are informed that they must not discuss the interview with other students, and the school reserves the right to keep students out of lessons to ensure this is the case: this applies to the alleged perpetrator, victim and witnesses
- Details can be shared with the Police and other external agencies, if deemed necessary by the school, and in line with GDPR.

Due to the potential for some specific forms of bullying to be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviour, staff members involved in dealing with the incident are required to consider whether there is a need for safeguarding processes to be implemented.

12 Sanctions

The school believes that all young people have the right learn from any errors in judgement, and perform better in the future. Therefore the school will seek to educate the alleged perpetrator as to the consequences of their actions and warned that there must be no further incidents. The headteacher will inform the perpetrator of the type of sanction to be used in this instance, e.g. detentions or service-based activities, and future sanctions if the bullying continues.

The school will attempt a restorative justice approach. This will either be in writing to the victim, and / or witnesses if appropriate, or preferably face-to-face, but only with the victim's full consent. Discretion will be used here; victims will never feel pressured into a face-to-face meeting with the perpetrator.

Parents are informed of bullying incidents and what action is being taken.

All staff involved in managing instances of bullying will be aware that taking disciplinary action and providing support are not mutually exclusive, and should be conducted concurrently to encourage more positive behaviour in future.

The school's focus when handling perpetrators will be supporting them to develop more positive behaviours and to refrain from abusive and bullying behaviours in the future.

13 Support

In the event of bullying, victims will be offered the following support:-

- Emotional support and reassurance from the pastoral and inclusion teams, including possible referral to outside agencies
- Reassurance that it was right to report the incident and that appropriate action will be taken
- Liaison with parents to ensure a continuous dialogue of support
- Advice and direction not to retaliate or reply, but to keep the evidence and show or give it to their parent or a member of staff
- Advice on aspects of online safety, in the event of cyberbullying, to prevent re-occurrence, including, where appropriate, discussion with their parents to evaluate their online habits and age-appropriate advice on how the perpetrator might be blocked online
- Discussion with parents on whether police action is required

The school will carefully consider in each instance of bullying that is resolved whether it is appropriate to separate victim(s) and perpetrator(s) in lessons, teaching groups, before and after school and break times. Victims will be encouraged to broaden their friendship groups by joining lunchtime or after-school clubs or activities.

The school will acknowledge that bullying may be an indication of underlying issues. Perpetrators will be offered support to assist with any underlying mental health or emotional wellbeing issues using resources in school and external agencies.

Further support:

The progress of both the perpetrator and the victim will be monitored by their respective form tutors and Head of House. One-on-one sessions to discuss how the victim and perpetrator are progressing may be appropriate.

Students who have bullied others will be supported in the following ways:-

- A consequence for their actions
- Being able to discuss what happened
- Reflection
- Help to understand what they did wrong and why change is needed
- Appropriate assistance from parents

In cases where the effects of bullying are so severe, and interventions and support have not fully remedied the impact and the student cannot successfully reintegrate back into the school, the school will support the family in transferring the student to another mainstream school with the consent and involvement of the student's parents.

Where a student who has been the victim of bullying has developed such complex needs that alternative provision is required, the student, their parents, the headteacher and DSL will meet to discuss potential use of alternative provision.

14 Bullying outside of school

Staff are fully aware that bullying happens both in and outside of school hours and premises.

The headteacher has a specific statutory power to discipline students for poor behaviour outside of the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives the headteacher the power to regulate students' conduct when they are not on school premises, and therefore, not under the lawful charge of a school staff member.

Teachers have the power to discipline students for misbehaving outside of the school premises. This can relate to bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, and especially where it impacts the victim's ability to return to school.

15 Record keeping

Records will be maintained of allegations, evidence, decisions taken regarding support and sanctions, as well as referrals to outside agencies and meetings with parents. This will enable:-

- Identifying patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour on the part of certain students
- Reflecting on whether cases could have been handled better and using these reflections to inform future practice
- Considering effectiveness of provision and the status of the culture of anti-bullying in the school
- Considering adjustments to the policy and wider policies and procedures in the school in order to prevent future bullying

Bullying Report Form

This form will be sent to the Assistant Head in charge of Behaviour and Safeguarding, upon completion.

Personal details	
Name of person reporting incident:	
Name of student being bullied:	
Year group:	
Form group:	
How may we contact you? (please circle)	
At school	At home
Home address:	
Email:	
Telephone:	

Incident details
What happened?
Where did the incident take place?
When did the incident occur?

Who has been suspected of bullying?
Did anyone else see the incident?
According to the victim, how often does the bullying take place?
According to the victim, how long has the bullying been going on?