




Policy Document

Policy Document	
Subject	Anti-Bullying Policy
Approval Date: October 2025	Review Date: October 2026
Signed by: 	Written by: School
Name:	S. England
Role:	Headteacher

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Legal Framework
3. Definition
4. Types of Bullying
5. Roles and Responsibilities
6. Prevention
7. Child on Child Abuse
8. Procedures
9. Record Keeping

Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Introduction

Ashwell Primary School is committed to providing a safe, positive, valuing and inclusive environment for pupils, staff and parents/carers. The anti-bullying policy and practice plays an important role in this.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 outlines several legal obligations regarding the school's response to bullying. Under section 89, schools must have measures in place to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. These measures are part of the school's Behaviour Policy, which is communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents.

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

The following principles inform our anti-bullying approach:

- Bullying behaviour is in all circumstances unacceptable.
- All adults in the school community (staff, governors and parents/carers) are expected to present positive role models to children.
- Bullying is a shared problem and staff and parents will need to work together in partnership to resolve incidents.
- The safety and welfare of the children concerned will at all times be central to decisions about actions taken in response to bullying.
- Anti-bullying approaches will be consistent with the values of our community and preparing children for life in an inclusive society. These include incorporating an acceptance of and valuing of difference, the need to cope with difficult individuals and the role of forgiveness.
- When incidents have been dealt with, all parties should be supported and enabled to move on positively.

Bullying is a safeguarding issue. In some cases, persistent or severe bullying may constitute child-on-child abuse. Where staff believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, safeguarding procedures will be followed, and concerns will be referred to the DSL.

2. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- 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
- Online Safety Act 2024

This policy has been written in accordance with guidance, including, but not limited to:

- 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 (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2025'
- DfE (2022) 'Behaviour for Schools – advice for Headteachers and School Staff'

- DfE (2020) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- E-safety Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Relationships and Health Education Policy
- Suspension and Exclusion Policy

3. Definition

The following 4 dimensions collectively help us to define bullying behaviour

➤ **Bullying is intentionally hurtful.**

It is the deliberate, unjustifiable and unprovoked use of aggressive behaviour. It includes actions that cause physical, emotional or mental hurt to the victim and actions that violate another person's freedom and rights.

➤ **Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.**

➤ **Bullying is a repeated experience.**

Being bullied is the experience of persistent or repeated anti-social behaviour. However, occasionally there can be single incidents which constitute bullying because of the fear and intimidation that projects beyond that initial incident.

➤ **Bullying also involves an inequality of power.**

The person/s being bullied find it difficult to reject or deal with the offending behaviour, or those involved in the bullying behaviour have power over the victim. Some power imbalances can be subtle or build up over time, but more common examples include that they are bigger/stronger/older, have more friends, are more established in the school or care less about the consequences of their actions. Bullying behaviour can involve individuals or groups.

Vulnerable Groups

Vulnerable groups are more likely to be the targets of bullying due to the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different to themselves.

Vulnerable pupils may include, but are not limited to:

- Pupils who are adopted.
- Pupils suffering from a health problem.
- Pupils with caring responsibilities.
- Pupils from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Pupils who are refugees/asylum seekers
- Pupils with EAL.

Pupils with certain characteristics are also more likely to be targets of bullying, including, but not limited to:

- Pupils who are LGBTQ+, perceived to be LGBTQ+ or exploring gender identity
- Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) pupils.
- Pupils with SEND.

Bullying may also involve coercive control, exclusion through digital means (e.g. group chat exclusion or image sharing), or the use of AI-generated or manipulated content (deepfakes) to humiliate others.

4. Types of bullying

Many kinds of behaviour can be considered bullying, and bullying can be related to almost anything. Teasing another pupil because of their appearance, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, home life, culture, or SEND are some of the types of bullying that can occur.

Bullying is acted out through the following mediums:

- Verbal
- Physical
- Emotional
- Online (cyberbullying)

Racist bullying: Bullying another person based on their ethnic background or skin colour. Racist bullying 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 gender identity or gender presentation, or for not conforming to dominant gender roles.

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 or gender stereotypes.

Ableist bullying: Bullying behaviour that focusses 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 – usually through verbal and emotional bullying.

Socioeconomic 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.

Examples of bullying include:

- *Verbal bullying* – such as mimicking, putting people down, saying unpleasant things about family, clothes or appearance, name-calling, anonymous notes and texts, blackmail, and deliberately embarrassing or humiliating others, posting nasty remarks on the internet.
- *Physical bullying* – such as hitting, hurting, hair pulling, pushing people around, kicking, deliberately disrupting work or play and extortion.
- *Indirect bullying* – such as spreading rumours, isolation, exclusion and getting others to be hurtful or unkind, forwarding hurtful texts, photographs or messages.
- *Psychological bullying* – such as intimidation, threats and looks to make another child feel uncomfortable or fearful.

Cyber Bullying

Our school community has a clear awareness of the risks posed to pupils from cyber bullying and recognises the shared responsibility we have to ensure its prevention. We recognise that cyber bullying can:

- be conducted in a variety of different ways including via mobile phones, social media sites and the internet
- be carried out anonymously and/or by people completely unknown to the receiver
- be carried out by people of all different ages
- be carried out at any time of day or night
- sometimes be unintentional, e.g. becoming the mistaken recipient of a message

Online and Digital Harassment,

Digital and online harassment may now include the sharing or creation of manipulated or AI-generated images (deepfakes), exclusion from online groups or chats, or repeated harmful comments through digital platforms such as voice notes or social media. The school recognises that such behaviour can have severe emotional impact and will treat these incidents as bullying.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for:

- Evaluating and reviewing this policy to ensure that it does not discriminate against any pupils on the basis of their protected characteristics or backgrounds.
- The overall implementation and monitoring of this policy.
- Ensuring that all governors are appropriately trained regarding safeguarding and child protection at induction.
- Ensuring that the school adopts a tolerant and open-minded policy towards difference.
- Ensuring the school is inclusive.
- Analysing any bullying data to establish patterns and reviewing this policy in light of these.
- Ensuring the DSL has the appropriate status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the role.
- Appointing a safeguarding link governor who will work with the DSL to ensure the policies and practices relating to safeguarding, including the prevention of cyberbullying, are being implemented effectively.
- Ensuring that pupils are taught how to keep themselves and others safe, including online.

The Headteacher 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 improve procedures.
- Keeping a record of all reported incidents, including which type of bullying has occurred, to allow for proper analysis of the data collected.
- Analysing the data in the bullying record at termly intervals to identify trends, so that appropriate measures to tackle them can be implemented.
- Arranging appropriate training for staff members.

Teachers and other staff are responsible for:

- Being alert to social dynamics in their class.
- Being available for pupils who wish to report bullying.
- Providing follow-up support after bullying incidents.
- Being alert to possible bullying situations, particularly exclusion from friendship groups, and informing the pupil's heads of year of such observations.
- Refraining from stereotyping when dealing with bullying.

- Understanding the composition of pupil groups, showing sensitivity to those who have been the victims of bullying.
- Reporting any instances of bullying once they have been approached by a pupil for support.
- Corresponding and meeting with parents where necessary.
- Providing a point of contact for pupils and parents when more serious bullying incidents occur.

Parents are responsible for:

- Informing their child's teacher 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.

Pupils 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 pupils in incidents.
- Keeping evidence of cyberbullying and informing a member of staff should they fall victim to cyberbullying.

Ashwell Primary School follows the Therapeutic Thinking (formally Hertfordshire Steps) behaviour approach, which seeks to identify and address the causes of bullying, put educational and protective consequences in place in the event of bullying, and restore relationships wherever possible.

6. Prevention

The school will clearly communicate a whole-school commitment to addressing bullying and have a clear set of values and standards which will be regularly promoted across the whole school.

All members of the school will be made aware of this policy and their responsibilities in relation to it. All staff members will receive training on identifying and dealing with the different types of bullying.

All types of bullying will be discussed as part of the Personal, Social, Health, Citizenship Education (PSHCE) and Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) curriculum, in line with the SRE Policy.

This curriculum will explore and discuss issues at age-appropriate stages such as:

- Healthy and respectful relationships.
- Boundaries and consent.
- Stereotyping, prejudice and equality.
- Body confidence and self-esteem.
- How to recognise abusive relationships and coercive control.
- Harmful sexual behaviour, the concepts involved and why they are always unacceptable, and the laws relating to it.

Staff will encourage pupil cooperation and the development of interpersonal skills using group and pair work. Diversity, difference and respect for others will be promoted and celebrated through various lessons. Opportunities to extend friendship groups and interactive skills will be provided through participation in special events, e.g. drama productions, sporting activities and cultural groups.

The school promotes a culture of kindness, respect and inclusion through assemblies, curriculum teaching and pupil-led initiatives. Pupils are encouraged to take part in anti-bullying campaigns and

to express their views through school council and pupil surveys. Anonymous reporting routes (such as worry boxes or online termly wellbeing questionnaires) are available so children can report bullying safely.

Seating plans will be organised and altered in a way that prevents instances of bullying. Potential victims of bullying will be placed in working groups with other pupils who do not abuse or take advantage of others.

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

The school will ensure potential perpetrators are given support as required, so their educational, emotional and social development is not negatively influenced by outside factors, e.g. mental health issues.

7. Child-on-child abuse

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

To prevent child-on-child abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, the school will educate pupils about abuse, its forms, and the importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others through the curriculum, assemblies and PSHCE lessons, in line with the [Prevention](#) section of this policy.

All staff will:

- Be aware that pupils of any age and gender are capable of abusing their peers.
- Be aware that abuse can occur inside and outside of school settings.
- Be aware of the scale of harassment or abuse, and that just because it is not being reported does not mean it is not happening.
- Take all instances of child-on-child abuse equally seriously regardless of the characteristics of the perpetrators or victims.
- Never tolerate abuse as “banter” or “part of growing up”, and will never justify sexual harassment, e.g. as “boys being boys”, as this can foster a culture of unacceptable behaviours and one that risks normalising abuse.
- Be aware that child-on-child abuse can be manifested in many ways, including sexting, sexual harassment and assault, and hazing or initiation-type violence.
- Always challenge any harmful physical behaviour that is sexual in nature, such as inappropriate touching. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

Sexual harassment in particular can take many forms, including but not limited to:

- Telling sexual stories, making sexual remarks, or calling someone sexualised names.
- Sexual “jokes” or taunting.
- Deliberately brushing against someone.
- Displaying images or video of a sexual nature.
- Upskirting (this is a criminal offence).
- Online sexual harassment, e.g. creating or sharing sexual imagery, sexual comments on social media, or sexual coercion or threats.

Pupils will be made aware of how to raise concerns or make a report and how any reports will be handled – this includes the process for reporting concerns about friends or peers. If a pupil has been harmed, is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral may be made to children’s social care

services (CSCS) and potentially the police, where the DSL deems this appropriate in the circumstances.

All staff will be aware and sensitive towards the fact that pupils may not be ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused. Pupils being abused may feel embarrassed, humiliated, scared, or threatened.

The school's stance on addressing child-on-child abuse, including sexual abuse, and the procedures in place will be adhered to if any instances are uncovered or disclosed. More information on the school's approach to preventing and managing instances of child-on-child abuse can be found within the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

8. Procedures

Reporting bullying/bullying concerns

At Ashwell we are committed to taking any incidents of bullying, or suspected bullying, which do arise very seriously; we consider ourselves to be a 'telling school'. It is the responsibility of any member of our community to report concerns they have about bullying or suspected bullying, including:

- class teachers and teaching assistants;
- lunchtime supervisors who should report concerns to teachers or SLT;
- external staff, who work regularly in school, e.g. sports coaches
- parents, who should receive immediate acknowledgement of their concern.
- **Be aware of Child on Child abuse: For further guidance refer to the Child Protection Policy**

It is important that any individual who may have received bullying behaviour, feels safe to report any concerns they have as soon as possible. Information about clear communication channels for reporting any incidents are shared with children and parents and are displayed in school. This is why we consider ourselves to be a 'telling school'.

Bullying outside of school

The Headteacher has a specific statutory power to discipline pupils 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 pupils' 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 pupils for misbehaving outside of the school premises. This can relate to any 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 is investigated and acted on. In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying, members of staff can only discipline the pupil on school premises, or elsewhere when the pupil is under the lawful control of the member of staff, e.g. on a school trip.

Reporting and Consequences

Minor incidents and early concerns are reported to the victim's class teacher, who fully investigates the incident, sets appropriate consequences for the perpetrator following our behaviour policy, and records details of the incident on the school monitoring system.

Where there have been confirmed incidents of bullying, parents will be informed, and notified of the consequences. Consequences will be escalated according to our behaviour policy.

Support

Pupils who have been bullied are supported in the following ways:

- Being listened to
- Being reassured
- Being offered continued emotional support

Pupils who have bullied others are supported in the following ways:

- Receiving a consequence for their actions
- Being able to discuss what happened
- Being helped to reflect on why they became involved
- Being helped to understand what they did wrong and why they need to change their behaviour

The school will offer restorative opportunities where appropriate to rebuild relationships and promote empathy.

9. Record Keeping

The DSL will ensure that robust records are kept with regard to all reported or otherwise uncovered incidents of bullying – this includes recording where decisions have been made, e.g. sanctions, support, escalation of a situation and resolutions.

The Headteacher and DSL will ensure that all decisions and actions recorded are reviewed on a regular basis for the purposes of:

- Identifying patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour on the part of certain pupils that may need to be handled, e.g. with pastoral support.
- Identify trends by type of bullying, location, year group, gender, and protected characteristic.
- Reflecting on whether cases could have been handled better and using these reflections to inform future practice.
- Considering whether prevention strategies could be strengthened based on any patterns in the cases that arise.

This analysis will inform preventive work and be shared termly with the governing board as part of safeguarding reporting.

Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed every year by the Headteacher and governing body.

The scheduled review date for this policy is **October 2026**.