

	<b>Anti-bullying Policy</b>	
	<b>Last reviewed: September 2025</b>	<b>Next review: September 2026</b>
	<b>Linked Governor: Tracey Evans</b>	<b>SLT Member: David Beattie</b>

## 1 Scope of policy

“Bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals. It can be a barrier to their learning and have serious consequences for their mental health. Bullying which takes place at school does not only affect an individual during childhood but can have a lasting effect on their lives well into adulthood (Department for Education, 2017).”

Ashlyns School believes that everyone has the right to feel welcome, safe and happy and is committed to ensuring that all members of the school community are able to achieve their potential without the fear of being subjected to hurtful behaviour.

It is the responsibility of all members of the school community to implement these anti-bullying procedures and it is our aim to prevent bullying by establishing a positive environment and encouraging standards of behaviour that promote a sense of responsibility for the welfare of others.

At Ashlyns School, we take the issue of bullying very seriously. Students, parents/carers and staff should understand that reporting instances of bullying is essential and be assured that they will be fully supported.

It should be noted that the use of technology to intimidate others is an increasing national trend and that such forms of bullying may also be dealt with robustly under the school’s anti-bullying procedures, even in the event it occurs outside of school.

Please note that this policy should be read in conjunction with the school’s behaviour and child protection policies.

## 2 What is bullying?

Whilst there is no single definition of bullying, the Department for Education provides the following guidance:

*Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. (‘Preventing and Tackling Bullying’, DfE July 2017)*

Most definitions of bullying include the following dimensions:

- The bullying is intended to cause distress
- The behaviour is repeated

- There is an imbalance of power between the perpetrator of bullying and the target

## **2.1 Forms of bullying**

Forms of bullying can include:

- emotional/psychological: being unkind, purposefully excluding, tormenting, threats of violence
- physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- cyber: using any area of the internet or social media to threaten, intimidate, degrade, embarrass or upset others
- sexual: behaviour, physical or non-physical, where sexuality or gender is used as a weapon against another. For example, abusive and sexualised name calling, inappropriate and uninvited touching

## **2.2 Reasons for bullying**

Students may be targeted on the basis of:

- ethnic background, religion or culture
- disability, education needs or being particularly able, gifted or talented
- sexual orientation
- gender (including sexualised bullying)
- size, appearance or health conditions
- social or economic status
- age/maturity
- home circumstances

## **3 Signs and symptoms**

A young person may display signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Whilst not exhaustive or always an indication of bullying, adults should be aware of these possible signs and should investigate if a young person:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the school/public bus
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn or anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with damaged clothing or property
- has possessions which 'go missing'
- asks for money or starts stealing
- continually loses money
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating

- is frightened to say what is wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid of the internet or mobile devices

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

#### **4 Child-on-child abuse**

Bullying falls under the category of child-on-child abuse under the statutory guidance “Keeping children safe in education 2024”. Ashlyns is proactive in preventing the presence of child-on-child abuse including bullying. Details of this are explained in the below roles and responsibilities section.

### **5 Roles, responsibilities and reporting bullying**

It is the responsibility of all members of the school community to challenge bullying if it occurs. All staff are made aware of the procedures they should follow if an incidence of hurtful behaviour is brought to their attention. The first point of contact for parents should be the student’s Form Tutor and then the Head of Year. Bullying can also be reported via the equality tile, and students can book an appointment to meet a Safeguarding and Pastoral Support Officer via RM Unify on their chromebook. Students get a further opportunity to report bullying via the termly anti-bullying survey. The Headteacher is responsible for this policy.

#### **5.1 The role of the school**

Ashlyns School adopts a range of strategies to reduce bullying and tackle it effectively when it does occur. These include:

- preventing, de-escalating and stopping any harmful behaviour
- maintaining a culture, which encourages and enables students to report bullying incidents
- reacting to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way
- taking measures to safeguard the student who has experienced the bullying and implement sources of support for the student where appropriate
- applying disciplinary consequences to the student causing the bullying
- working with the student who has caused the bullying to ensure they learn from the experience, for example through mediation or multi-agency support
- involving staff, parents/carers and students in the resolution of conflicts that may arise
- developing and implementing new strategies to prevent and tackle bullying
- regularly reviewing policies and strategies
- involving staff, parents/carers and students in conflicts that may arise
- developing and implementing new strategies to tackle bullying
- addressing bullying and child-on-child abuse issues as part of the PSHE curriculum, assemblies, and tutor programmes (further detailed in section 5)
- recording incidents of bullying and harassment
- reacting to trends occurring within the school in order to intervene
- promoting positive behaviour through the application of the school values and the school’s rewards system

#### **5.2 The role of staff**

All staff have an important role to play in ensuring that bullying is identified and reported. Staff should ensure that they:

- understand the principles and purpose of the Anti-Bullying Policy

- understand their responsibilities regarding bullying
- know what consequences and behaviour management strategies are in place and where to seek support
- understand the needs of vulnerable students
- know the procedures for reporting and referral
- use form time and curriculum time to promote an open and honest dialogue with their students about bullying and ways to prevent it
- promote positive behaviour through the application of the school values

#### **4.3 The role of students**

Students also play a vital role in tackling bullying and they should ensure that they:

- know and understand the key principles Anti-Bullying Policy which are outlined through the pastoral curriculum
- know and understand the difference between harassment or unkind behaviour and bullying
- know the consequences if they are found to be bullying
- respond honestly to questionnaires or discussions about bullying
- take responsibility for their own behaviour to ensure they are not being hurtful to others in school, whether intentionally or otherwise
- report bullying to a peer or adult if they are either the victim of bullying **or** witness bullying of others. The school promotes a culture that there are no innocent bystanders
- Promote positive behaviour through upholding the school values

#### **5.4 The role of parents/carers**

Parents and carers should work in partnership with the school to support children who are being bullied or who bully. Parents should ensure that they:

- report any incidents of bullying to the school
- look for signs of behaviour change which are often linked with bullying (see **section 3**)
- are proactive in monitoring their child's phone and internet access, in particular social networking sites
- support the school in their actions, including where sanctions are imposed on their child if they have been found responsible for bullying
- promote tolerance and kindness
- Promote positive behaviour through the application of the school values

### **5 Actions to prevent bullying**

We adopt a proactive approach to preventing bullying, being vigilant for signs of bullying and taking reports of bullying seriously. Students are provided with regular opportunities to talk about bullying, and we listen to their views in order to adapt our strategies for dealing with bullying. Assemblies, whole school questionnaires, Student Voice, curriculum time and Form time all focus on the issues of bullying and how to tackle it as a whole school community. A variety of methods and services are used in order to prevent bullying, including:

- assemblies
- PSHE & RSE curriculum
- form time programme
- student voice groups
- equalities staff action group
- student equality group
- staff training

- regular discussions about bullying
- annual bullying survey
- Student Leadership Team discussions
- Anti-Bullying week (including survey - which is analysed at Senior Leadership level)
- behaviour reports
- protective behaviours courses
- peer mentoring
- support from the pastoral team - Form Tutor, Learning Mentor, Head of Year
- support from Student Support Workers
- support from external agencies
- referrals to School Counsellor
- display materials around school
- organisation of the school environment
- Rewards and Consequences procedures
- Online reporting procedure through the RUnify 'Learning Mentor' tab
- Online reporting via the RUnify "Equality tile" tab
- Inclusion room concern box
- Consequence reduction and intervention resources provided by Dr Kathy Weston

## **6 Actions to tackle bullying**

All reported incidents of bullying are investigated and taken seriously. A record is kept of all incidents.

All incidents are dealt with on an individual basis, but the following illustrates the steps that may be taken when dealing with incidents:

- Where bullying or hurtful behaviour is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with promptly by the member of staff who witnessed it or the person to whom the bullying was reported.
- Statements from all parties involved (including any witnesses) will be taken and collated by the member of staff investigating.
- After investigating the incident, a decision will be made about any outcomes, including support systems, consequences and monitoring processes.
- All parties will be kept informed about what these outcomes are and the situation will be closely monitored.
- Where appropriate, students will undergo a process of reconciliation if all parties agree to this.
- Students who have been found to have bullied others will be reminded of the possible consequences of bullying and that repeated behaviour will incur further consequences.

Parents/carers of both the victim and the bully will be kept informed about incidents and any action taken, or to be taken, by the school, although the school will not discuss specific actions relating to any child other than your own. Parents/carers are asked to support the strategies that the school puts in place. In order to investigate thoroughly and complete swift action in the event of a bullying incident, it is important that all parties continue to attend school, for which the school will apply intervention as seen necessary in order to keep students safe. Further information about the possible consequences of bullying can be found in the Behaviour Policy.

Sections 90 and 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 say that a school's disciplinary powers can be used to address pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff, but only if it would be reasonable for the school to regulate pupils' behaviour in those circumstances ('Preventing and Tackling Bullying', DfE July 2017).

If a parent/carer is concerned about bullying they should contact their child's form tutor in the first instance. If the matter is not resolved and a parent/carer wishes to take the matter further, they should then contact the Head of Year, followed by the Assistant Headteacher.

## **7 Cyberbullying**

The school promotes positive online conduct through various avenues including sessions carried out in PSHE, Tutor time, assemblies and Computer Science lessons in order to ensure that all members of the school community are treated with kindness, respect and dignity.

*'Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff' (2024) states that "Many online behaviour incidents amongst young people occur outside the school day and off the school premises. Parents are responsible for this behaviour. However, often incidents that occur online will affect the school culture. Schools should have the confidence to sanction pupils when their behaviour online poses a threat or causes harm to another pupil, and/or could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school, when the pupil is identifiable as a member of the school or if the behaviour could adversely affect the reputation of the school. "*

If a student has been the victim of cyberbullying, the school reserves the right to be involved whether the electronic material was produced within the school or outside as such incidents often continue within school. Even where online bullying occurs exclusively beyond school, students must be aware that many forms of cyberbullying are illegal and the school will inform the police if necessary.

*"The Education Act 2011 amended the power in the Education Act 1996 to provide that when an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, has been seized by a member of staff who has been formally authorised by the headteacher, that staff member can examine data or files, and delete these, 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" ('Preventing and Tackling Bullying', DfE July 2017).*

In the event that an incident involves the creating, viewing or sharing of nude or semi-nude images and/or videos, we then follow the process as detailed in *"Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025, Part Five: Child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment."*

## **8 Recording and reporting**

Instances of bullying are recorded on CPOMS and are reported to school governors on a termly basis.

## **9 External Agencies**

In some cases it is appropriate to involve external agencies to aid in an investigation or to support students who have been involved in bullying, such as the police, PCSOs, DESC, Youth Connexions and school counsellors. If this is the case, parents/carers will usually be informed.

## **10. Artificial Intelligence**

Artificial Intelligence Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Gemini.

Ashlyns School recognises that AI has many uses to help pupils learn, but may also have the potential to be used to bully others. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real. This includes deepfake pornography: pornographic content created using AI to include someone's likeness. 8 Ashlyns School will treat any use of AI to bully pupils very seriously, in line with our anti-bullying and behaviour policy.

Staff should be aware of the risks of using AI tools whilst they are still being developed and where existing AI tools are used in cases which may pose a risk to all individuals that may be affected by it, including, but not limited to, pupils and staff.

## **10 Support services for parents who are concerned about their child**

There are a number of support services available to parents/carers, including:

Young Minds	<a href="http://www.youngminds.org.uk">www.youngminds.org.uk</a>
Bullying UK	<a href="http://www.bullying.co.uk">www.bullying.co.uk</a>
Kidscape	<a href="http://www.kidscape.org.uk">www.kidscape.org.uk</a>
NSPCC	<a href="http://www.nspcc.org.uk/">www.nspcc.org.uk/</a>
Anti-Bullying Alliance	<a href="https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/advice-and-support">https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/advice-and-support</a>
Childline	<a href="https://www.childline.org.uk/">https://www.childline.org.uk/</a>

### *Online specific support*

CEOP - Think you know	<a href="https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/">https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/</a> - cyber bullying and online issues
UK Safer Internet Centre	<a href="https://saferinternet.org.uk/">https://saferinternet.org.uk/</a>
Childnet	<a href="https://www.childnet.com/">https://www.childnet.com/</a>
Commonsense media	<a href="https://www.commonsensemedia.org/">https://www.commonsensemedia.org/</a>
Internet matters	<a href="https://www.internetmatters.org/">https://www.internetmatters.org/</a>
London Grid for Learning	<a href="https://www.lgfl.net/default.aspx">https://www.lgfl.net/default.aspx</a>
Parent zone	<a href="https://parentzone.org.uk/">https://parentzone.org.uk/</a>