



Pitsford School

School Policy Document

Name of Policy: Anti-bullying Policy including Cyber bullying

Audience: Public

Date for Next Review: Autumn 2025

SLT Member(s) Responsible for Reviewing and Updating the Policy: FMK

1. Aims, Rationale and definitions

To try and ensure that pupils can learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied.

We aim to be a school that:

- **listens** - all pupils and parents and carers are listened to and influence strategies and approaches to prevent, report and respond to incidents of bullying.
- **includes us all** - all pupils, including those with SEN/Disability, are included, valued and participate fully in all aspects of school life.
- **respects** - all school staff are role models to others within the school in how they treat others.
- **challenges** - all forms of discriminatory language – including disablist language – is challenged and taken seriously
- **celebrates difference** – difference is actively and visibly celebrated and welcome across the whole school.
- **understands** - all school staff, pupils and parents and carers understand what bullying is and what it isn't.
- **believes** - all pupils, including disabled children and those with SEN, and their parents and carers are acknowledged, believed and taken seriously when reporting incidents of bullying.
- **reports bullying** - all pupils within the school and their parents and carers understand how to report incidents of bullying.
- **takes action** - we respond quickly to all incidents of bullying. Pupils, including disabled pupils and those with SEN, participate fully in decisions made about them and help to formulate appropriate action to respond to incidents of bullying.
- **has clear policies** - our school's anti-bullying policy reflects these principles and is embedded within other school policies. They are widely and actively promoted to school staff, pupils and their parents and carers.

Rationale Bullying is anti – social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and should not be tolerated. It can cause physical and emotional harm and may even cause psychological damage.

Bullying is defined as actions that are

- 1) Deliberately hurtful behaviour,
- 2) Repeated over a period of time,

3) Where it is unprovoked or difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves because there is an imbalance of power.

The main types of bullying are:

- Physical (hitting, kicking, theft)
- Verbal (name calling, racist remarks)
- Indirect (spreading rumours, excluding from social groups)
- Cyber bullying (via text messages, social media websites or other electronic means)

Bullying is usually based on picking up of differences, which could be racial, religious, cultural, sexual/sexist, homophobic, or based on SEN or physical disabilities (real or perceived).

Our Context and Ethos

At Pitsford School we see bullying in the context of relationship education. We work to be proactive by reinforcing healthy respectful relationships between pupils. Not all unhealthy relationships are bullying. See definitions below. So we work to support pupils to understand their relationships and the role they might have in a friendship dynamic. When friends and peers fall out with each other, we work to support them to find strategies for getting along. We are a Girls On Board School and implement the 'Girls on board' strategies, as well as a similar but subtly different approach for Boys – 'Working With Boys'. Our PSHE curriculum and SRE underpins this ethos. We have a specialist curriculum for Year 9 that builds this understanding through recognising individual and group identity. In Year 7 and 8 we also focus on active bystanding/upstanding.

The ABA defines bullying as: 'Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can be verbal, physical or psychological. It can happen face to face or online.'

Relationship Conflict is different but can also be harmful: 'Relationship conflict is a conflict resulting from either personality clashes or negative emotional interactions between two or more people.'

We encourage children, parents and teachers to recognise the difference and we tailor the approach accordingly to support a healthy and positive group dynamic and the long term relationships between the children as they mature.

Signs of bullying might include:

- Unwillingness to come to School
- Withdrawn, isolated behaviour
- Complaining about missing possessions
- Refusal to talk about the problem
- Being easily distressed
- Damaged or incomplete work

Cyber bullying

Cyberbullying is a type of aggression defined by Childnet International as 'the sending or posting of harmful or cruel text or images using the internet or other digital communication devices'. Further advice is also available in the Online Safety Policy, Acceptable Use Policies and in the relevant section of the Safeguarding Policy.

The Anti-Bullying Association has identified seven types of cyberbullying ranging from abusive text messages, emails and phone calls, to bullying in internet chatrooms, social networking sites and instant messaging:

1. Text messages:- Unwelcome texts that are threatening or cause discomfort.
2. Pictures/video clips via mobile phones:- Images sent to others to make the victim feel threatened or embarrassed.
3. Mobile phone calls:- Silent calls or abusive messages; or stealing the victim's phone and using it to harass others, to make them believe the victim is responsible.
4. Emails:- Threatening or bullying emails, often sent using somebody else's IT account. 5. *New line* Instant messaging:- Unpleasant or unkind messages sent as young people conduct realtime conversations online.
6. Chatroom bullying:- Menacing or upsetting responses when young people are in a web-based chatroom. This includes interactive gaming sites.
7. Bullying via websites:- Use of defamatory blogs, personal website and online polling sites to intimidate and upset others.

Cyberbullying is insidious; it can be conducted 24 hours a day, seven days a week, following young people into their private space and outside school hours. It can be anonymous. The audience is large and can be reached rapidly. Unlike other forms of bullying, a single individual can experience a multiple attack – a video or picture posted to a website can be copied to many different sites. Bystanders can be accessories by passing on humiliating messages. Messages on social networking sites remain there to damage social life and friendships and, in the case of teaching staff, reputation and credibility.

In line with the Equality Act 2010 we are committed to preventing and responding effectively to the bullying of protected and vulnerable groups of children including age, becoming a transsexual person, being pregnant or having a child, disability/ race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or lack of religion/belief, sex or those who are or perceived to be LGBT.

We are aware that any of these can also be a contributing factor towards bullying that is based on appearance. We are aware that SEN individuals are more vulnerable to bullying, but also that they may not be able to identify this or may be more easily manipulated and confused. We are also aware that when students are carers, or looked after their circumstances may make them more vulnerable to bullying. We monitor our behaviour logs on my concern to ensure that discrimination does not occur by teachers who are dealing with bullying. We know that bullying can have an effect on the mental health that can have long term effects on a child, even into adult hood. We also know that those who have poor mental health are more likely to be bullied

2. Advice for pupils and parents

Bullying or relationship conflict? It is useful to consider the definition of bullying when considering how to make a report. Bullying will not be tolerated but equally, not all unkindness and relationship conflict is bullying, and labelling it before knowing all the facts can be counterproductive. However that does not mean that it will not be taken seriously or that it could not become bullying if left unchallenged. If you are not sure, a good place to start is with your tutor.

If you think it is bullying but you are not sure, it is often better to describe the situation without the label:

Think:

Is it intentional/deliberately hurtful (Does the perpetrator know that their behaviour is upsetting you? How can you tell?)

Has this happened repeatedly? Or are you worried that it could do if left unchecked. (it is often best to deal with problems early and stop them getting worse.)

Is there a power imbalance? What factors are making this difficult for you to deal with? It could be the age of the perpetrator or the fact that others are joining in?

What can you do if you think you are being bullied in or out of school?

- Read the anti-bullying policy and tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied.
- Inform your tutor, any other member of staff immediately who will take you seriously and deal with the situation in a way which will end any bullying that is occurring and not make things worse for you. The Heads of Section and, the Deputy Head have oversight of all bullying reports and they will work with you and your tutor to ensure that the matter is dealt with effectively.
- If possible try and record specific instances with details of times, locations and who might have been a witness to the events you have experienced.
- If you prefer you can report through the 'tell us' button on firefly or speak to a Sixth Form mentor.

If you believe someone is being bullied in school or out of school?

- Don't stand and watch; fetch help. Tell an adult immediately. Teachers have a way of dealing with bullying without getting you into trouble.
- If a friend tells that they are being bullied try and persuade them to tell a teacher. If this doesn't happen you should tell a teacher yourself.
- Do not condone or pretend to condone bullying. Show that you and your friends disapprove.
- Be sympathetic and supportive to someone who may be being bullied.
- Remember what it means to be an **active bystander**; being passive perpetuates bullying.
- Be careful about teasing people yourself or making personal remarks; if what you are about to say may be hurtful, don't say it.

As a parent worried about a child who may be being bullied

- Watch for signs of distress in your child, for example, they may suddenly not want to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to a normal standard.
- If you feel that your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour contact your child's tutor with as many details as you can. Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will be taken.
- Please be mindful that there will be other points of view and allow the school to help by investigating and getting full information.
- Discourage your child from hitting back or using abusive language as this will exacerbate the situation.

- Encourage your child to talk to their tutor about any worries.

As a parent whose child may have been accused of bullying

- We will inform you if an accusation of bullying has been made about your son or daughter.
- We will support your son or daughter during the process and listen to their 'side'.

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Offering an opportunity to discuss the experience with their form tutor or a member of staff of their choice
- Reassuring the pupil
- Offering support

Pupils who have bullied will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened
- Considering why the pupil became involved
- Informing parents or guardians, to help change the attitude of the pupil.

Sanctions

The following disciplinary steps can be taken:

- Official warnings to cease offending.
- Detention.
- Exclusion from certain areas of the School premises.
- Suspension.
- Expulsion.

In recent years, the most successful results have been when we feel that bullying is indeed taking place, we were able to explain to the pupils why their behaviour is upsetting others, and they undertook not to continue, along with the warning that a continuation could lead to suspension. This works in situations where genuine remorse and understanding is shown. The system is monitored and reviewed. In this way all pupils can move on through the school with no lasting ill-feeling.

3. The School's role

As a school we will:

- Offer positive role models in terms of mutual respect, listening and problem solving.
- Be aware of early signs of distress or withdrawal in pupils.
- Always listen, take seriously and act upon information received.

- Keep a log of bullying, or suspected bullying in order to identify patterns of behaviour (teachers are asked to routinely consider incidents in their classrooms or around school in the context of possible bullying and report via the behaviour logs).
- Include regular review and discussion of bullying with our Governor for Safeguarding who also has oversight of antibullying procedures, and with the DSLs.
- Ensure that accessible areas of school are patrolled effectively.
- Recognise that travel to and from school especially on school buses can also be a time when bullying occurs.
- Recognise that bullying is usually a group activity though it may not appear to be and rarely one lone individual targeting another.
- Recognise the role that Bystanders can have in a bullying situation.
- Provide support and work with parents to deal with instances of bullying outside of school, either face to face or online.
- Use any opportunity to discuss aspects of bullying and the appropriate way to behave towards others. E.g. Assemblies, form time, PSHE, opportunities in the curriculum such as drama, stories or poems, National Anti-Bullying Week in November.
- Support pupils to build positive self-images.
- Commend appropriate behaviour.
- Deal quickly, firmly and fairly with any complaints involving parents.
- When we suspect that a criminal offence may have been committed we will inform the police.

4. Dealing with a report

Procedures for staff, parents and pupils to follow if bullying occurs should be clear and well publicised throughout the School.

Pupils are regularly reminded of the procedures, and different methods of reporting. They can go directly to a tutor or trusted teacher. They can use the 'Tell Us...' button on Firefly. They can go to a sixth former or can indirectly ask a sixth form peer mentor for help via the 'Tell Us..'box in the library. We also have a school listener.

The following guidelines should be followed when dealing with incidents which may be part of a pattern which could be considered to be bullying:

- The incident should be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached or sees the incident.
- Stay calm, avoid making snap decisions or attaching blame.
- A clear account of the incident will be recorded and given to the form tutors, in the first instance, who may feel it needs to be passed on to the Head of Section.
- The teacher, Head of Section (or Deputy Head if appropriate) will interview all concerned and record the incident using MyConcern.
- If such incidents persist, or it appears to be indicative of a deeper issue, then the Head of Section will conduct an investigation, in order to determine if bullying is indeed occurring.
- We ask parents to allow us the time to gather information to facilitate a fair outcome.
- Following the investigation, a clear statement will be issued to the parents of all pupils concerned outlining the decision, the reasons for it and the consequences if behaviour is not moderated in the future. (see above)
- Sanctions will be used as appropriate.
- A bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.' Please refer to the appropriate section in the Safeguarding Policy on peer on peer abuse for details on making a referral.
- **Child on Child Abuse:** All staff should be aware of the sections in the Safeguarding Policy that refer to peer on peer abuse and sexual harassment or violence between children. Where bullying becomes a

safeguarding issue it may be appropriate to take advice or refer to Children's Services as per the policy.

5. Training of staff in the anti-bullying procedures is delivered in a number of ways:

6.

Staff Inset days and evenings: This will deal with whole school strategies and procedures as well as ways to encourage positive behaviour amongst pupils and guide pupils as to what to do if they think that they are being bullied, or see bullying behaviour in others. We use the resources from the ABA, including a 7 module online CPD course, elements of which are reinforced in face-to face training.

This can be found here: <https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/user> and is also in the safeguarding section on Firefly.

Tutor meetings and staff briefing: This is an opportunity to discuss age specific issues and timely issues as they arise. Tutors also are prepared for the delivery of PSHE in these sessions the content of which has a strong prevention aspect dealing with British Values, relationships education, emotional resilience and online awareness.

In addition

The Head of Section must be informed if either:

- a) A member of staff feels that, after investigation, bullying has, or may have, occurred.
- b) A parent reports a case of suspected bullying to a member of staff.

Through My Concern we will keep a log of all such cases with details of the outcomes. The DSLs will review any cases of bullying and keep oversight of any trends. These will be shared with the Governor for anti-bullying activity, Mrs Joan Harrop.

Protecting pupils

Pupils will be protected from cyberbullying in the following ways:

- Education in ICT and PSHE lessons on the safe use of the internet and other digital technologies:
- Pupils will learn to appreciate the impact of cyberbullying on the emotional welfare of other young people;
- By creating a culture, through education, whereby any incident of cyberbullying is reported;
- All e-communications sent using the School network will be monitored and, where possible, all offensive emails and other documents will be filtered and prevented from reaching the intended recipient;
- Pupils will be expected to sign up to an acceptable use of technologies policy.
- By creating dialogue with parents that recognises that protection from cyberbullying is a partnership between the School and Home.
- Pupils need to be aware that under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the Headmaster has the legal right to discipline pupils who cyberbully others.

Further guidance and help can be obtained on:

The anti-bullying alliance	https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/	
Childline	www.childline.org	0800 11111
The Lowdown	www.thelowdown.info	01604 634385
NSPCC	https://www.nspcc.org.uk/	