# Anti-Bullying Policy

| Review Date | Version number | Reviewer/Owner (post holder) | Approved by (Committee) | Signature |
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| November 2026 | 1 | Vice Principal | 17/11/2026 | K.Stevens |
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Material changes since last publication

| Section | Changes |
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| 1, 2.1, 2.4 | Updated to reflect current Department for Education guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, Behaviour in Schools, Preventing and Tackling Bullying, and the 2026 guidance on preventing and tackling bullying and harassment of school staff. |

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# 1. Introduction

The Trust intends and expects that all decisions around the use of Trust resources will be underpinned at all times by its vision and values:

**Our aim:**

To create centres of educational excellence that inspire all pupils to turn their potential into performance

**To achieve this our schools will:**

Provide a broad and balanced curriculum that allows pupils to develop their talents and ambitions

Deliver the highest quality learning opportunities facilitated by excellent teachers

Inspire our pupils to become confident, motivated and respectful individuals ready to make a positive contribution to society

**The Trust will support our schools by:**

Maximising the resources and expertise available to individual schools

Providing a platform for the sharing of excellent practice

Challenging and developing staff to turn their potential into performance

### 1.1. Aims

This policy sets out how Abbey Park School prevents, identifies, records, investigates and responds to bullying involving pupils, including behaviour online and behaviour outside the school premises where it affects pupils, the school community or the orderly running of the school.

The policy should be read as part of the school's wider safeguarding, behaviour, inclusion and equality arrangements.

- promote a culture in which pupils feel safe to report concerns and are confident that adults will act;
- prevent bullying through curriculum, culture, supervision, staff training and early intervention;
- respond consistently, proportionately and in a child-centred way;
- protect pupils from discrimination, harassment, victimisation and child-on-child abuse;
- support the pupil who has experienced harm and address the behaviour, needs and risks of the pupil responsible;
- identify patterns, repeat concerns and disproportionality through effective recording and review.

Bullying is an anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will pupils be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available to them.

Throughout the policy the term ‘parent’ is used to mean a pupil’s parent, carer or guardian.

**1.2 Statutory duties at the School**

This policy has been updated for 2026–27 with regard to current Department for Education guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, Behaviour in Schools, Preventing and Tackling Bullying, and the 2026 guidance on preventing and tackling bullying and harassment of school staff.

Relevant legislation includes the Education and Inspections Act 2006, Equality Act 2010, Children Act 1989, Children Act 2004 and Education Act 2002. The school will also have regard to relevant statutory guidance on suspension and permanent exclusion.

**1.3 Scope of this policy and links to other policies**

This policy applies at all times when the student is:

- in or at Abbey Park School; representing Abbey Park School or wearing Abbey Park School uniform;
- travelling to or from Abbey Park School;
- on Abbey Park School-organised trips;
- associated with Abbey Park School at any time;
- in the care of Abbey Park School or not and Abbey Park School becomes aware of an incident of bullying that affects a pupil’s ability to access education fully.

This policy shall also apply to students at all times and places in circumstances where failing to apply this policy may:

- affect the health, safety or well-being of a member of the Abbey Park School community or a member of the public;
- have repercussions for the orderly running of Abbey Park School;
- or bring Abbey Park School into disrepute

This policy has links to the following School policies and procedures:

- Equality Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- ICT Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Complaints procedure

This policy has regard to the following guidance and advice:

- Preventing and tackling bullying
- preventing and tackling bullying and harassment of school staff 2026
- Cyberbullying
- Working together to safeguard children (2026)
- Behaviour in school
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)

## 2. Guidance and Procedures

### 2.1 Definition of bullying

Bullying affects lots of people and can happen anywhere: at school, travelling to and from school, in sporting teams, in friendship or family groups or in the workplace.

Staff and students will be able to identify what Bullying is by using the flow chart, Annex A, using the phrase STOP – Several, Times On Purpose, and also by understanding the following;

Although there is no legal definition of bullying, we see Bullying as behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, which intentionally hurts another individual or group physically or emotionally. It often involves an imbalance of power that can make it difficult for the targeted pupil to defend themselves.

Not every conflict, disagreement, one-off unkind act or behaviour incident will meet the definition of bullying. However, every harmful incident can still require a behaviour, pastoral or safeguarding response. Staff must not dismiss a concern simply because repetition has not yet been established.

Bullying may be, but not limited to:

- **Physical**: hitting, kicking, pushing people around, spitting, or taking, damaging or hiding possessions
- **Verbal**: name-calling, taunting, teasing, insulting, making threats or demanding money
- **Exclusionary behaviour**: intimidating, isolating or excluding a person from a group
- **General unkindness**: spreading rumours or writing unkind notes, mobile phone texts or emails;
- **Low level disruptive behaviour**: wearing "banter" and "horseplay" over a pro-longed period of time;
- **Cyberbullying**: bullying that takes place using technology. This may include bullying through the use of mobile electronic devices, social media or gaming sites
- **Racist and Religious Bullying**: A range of hurtful behaviour, both physical and psychological, that makes a person feel unwelcome, marginalised, excluded, powerless or worthless because of their colour, ethnicity, culture, faith community, national origin or national status;
- **Sexist and Transphobic Bullying**: includes any behaviour, whether physical or non-physical, where sexuality is used as a weapon by boys or girls;
- **Homophobic Bullying**: targets someone because of their sexual orientation (or perceived sexual orientation);
- **Disablist Bullying**: targets a young person based on their disability, special needs or health needs. This can include manipulative bullying where a perpetrator forces the victim to act in a certain way or exploiting a certain aspect of the victim's disability.
- **Child on child Sexual bullying**: sexual insults, sexual language/gestures, name calling, unwanted physical contact, sexual violence or harassment.

**Safeguarding and child-on-child abuse**

Bullying may be a safeguarding issue. Where a report indicates that a child may be suffering, or is likely to suffer, harm, staff must follow the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and report the concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy through the school safeguarding system.

Child-on-child abuse can include sexual harassment or violence, abuse in intimate personal relationships between children, physical abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, initiation/hazing-type violence or rituals, online abuse and other harmful conduct. Safeguarding action takes priority over determining whether the behaviour meets the school definition of bullying.

The school will use a child-centred approach and will consider the wishes, safety, needs and best interests of the child alongside the need to protect other children.

Bullying is always unacceptable and will not be dismissed as being normal or as "banter" or simply "part of growing up". Bullying will not be tolerated at Abbey Park School because:

- it is harmful to the person who is bullied, to those who engage in bullying behaviour, and those who support them, and can in some cases lead to lasting psychological damage and even suicide;
- it interferes with a student's right to enjoy their learning and leisure time free from intimidation;

Bullying is any behaviour by an individual or group that:

- Is meant to hurt - the person or people doing the bullying know what they are doing and mean to do it
- Happens more than once – there will be a pattern of behaviour, not just a 'one off' incident
- Involves an imbalance of power – the person being bullied will usually find it very hard to defend themselves.

**2.2 Identifying and reporting concerns about bullying.**
All concerns about bullying will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly.

Pupils who are being bullied may not report it; however, there may be changes in their behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absence or clinging to adults. There may be changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from the School. All staff will be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with this policy.

Pupils who are bullying others also need support to help them to understand and change their behaviour.

All pupils will be encouraged to report bullying by:

- Talking to a member of staff of their choice
- Writing a statement about the bullying concern and giving it to a member of staff
- Using the reporting tool on the School website

- Contacting local and national support agencies for advice/support
- Reporting to a member of their peer group such as peer mentors
- Talking to parents

Parents are encouraged to report concerns about bullying and to support the School in tackling it. Trying to resolve bullying directly with pupils or their families can lead to problems escalating and staff should put measures in place to combat this.

Not all individuals recognise their behaviour is deliberate or intended to hurt. Some individuals may see their hurtful conduct as "teasing" or "a game" or "for the good of" the other person. These forms of bullying are equally unacceptable but may not be malicious and can often be corrected quickly with advice and without disciplinary sanctions.
If left unchallenged or dismissed low level disruption can have a wearing, and significant impact on targeted individuals exposed to such behaviour.

Bullying may also be regarded as threatening behaviour or harassment which can be either a criminal offence or a civil wrong. A person who makes a physical or sexual assault on another, or who steals or causes damage to the property of another, commits a criminal offence. Misuse of electronic communications could also be a criminal offence, for example it is an offence to send an electronic communication (such as a text message/direct message or email) to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety.

Bullying behaviour may be of such a nature that safeguarding concerns are raised. Such behaviour may include hazing behaviour, initiation rituals or any form of sexual harassment. See our Child protection and safeguarding policy for our approach to peer-on-peer abuse. Concerns about a student's welfare because they are the perpetrator or victim of bullying behaviour must be reported in accordance with the safeguarding policy and procedures and appropriate action taken, considering Swindon Children and Families threshold framework.

Abbey Park School will always treat a bullying incident as giving rise to a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

**2.3 Responding to reports about bullying**

**Pupils:** can report it one of a number of ways;

- tell his/her Tutor or any member of staff
- Report it on the reporting tool on our website
- tell his / her parent/carers;

**Parent/Carers:** Parents or Carers who are concerned that their child is being bullied should inform their child's Tutor or a member of the Pastoral team without delay.

The Staff member will take the following steps when dealing with concerns about bullying:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, staff will respond quickly by offering, advice, support and reassurance to the alleged victim.
- Take a clear account of what has happened.

- Pass the information on to relevant Pastoral Year team.

The relevant pastoral year team will agree on the best strategy for dealing with the matter.

If the alleged bullying behaviour raises a safeguarding concern, the matter should be reported in line with our Child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures before further investigation is carried out.

Pupils and staff who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Offering an opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of the Pastoral Team.
- Providing reassurance that the bullying will be addressed
- Through the tutor and Pastoral Team be offered continuous support
- The use of specialist interventions and/or referrals to other agencies e.g. Educational Psychology, school counsellor and Pastoral support assistant, where appropriate

**2.4 Managing the allegation:**
The relevant pastoral team will coordinate proportionate fact-finding. Pupils should normally be spoken to separately. Accounts, witness information and relevant digital or other evidence should be considered. The pupil's account must be taken seriously without predetermining the outcome.

Decisions should be based on the evidence available and on the nature, context, impact and risk of the behaviour. Staff should avoid relying on a fixed incident count. A serious first incident may warrant immediate safeguarding action or a significant sanction, while a pattern of lower-level behaviour may collectively amount to bullying.

They will consider:

- the nature of the incident(s): physical? verbal? exclusionary? etc.
- is it a "one-off" incident involving an individual or a group? is it part of a pattern of behaviour by an individual or a group?
- has physical injury been caused?
- who should be informed: Principal? Parents/Carers? the Designated Safeguarding Lead? children's social care? the police?
- can the alleged bully be questioned without disclosing the victim's identity?

**What is the likely outcome if the allegation proves to be correct?**
The school will select responses according to seriousness, context, risk, previous behaviour, impact and individual circumstances. Any disciplinary response will operate through the school Behaviour Policy; safeguarding action is separate and may run alongside it.

- safety planning and reasonable adjustments;
- parent/carer communication where appropriate;
- pastoral mentoring, check-ins or targeted support;
- education or intervention addressing prejudice, relationships, online behaviour or harmful conduct;

- proportionate sanctions under the Behaviour Policy;
- restorative work only where it is safe, suitable and freely agreed by the pupil who experienced the harm;
- increased supervision or changes to arrangements where necessary to protect pupils;
- referral to the DSL, external agencies or police where thresholds or circumstances require it.

**Staff:**
This policy focuses mainly on the bullying of students by students although it is recognised that a staff member could be a victim and on occasion may be perceived to be guilty of bullying. Abbey Park School has a zero tolerance of the bullying of staff, whether by students, parents/carers or other colleagues. Staff members who are concerned about being bullied or harassed should refer to the staff code of conduct. Students and parents/carers who feel that a member of staff is bullying should report this in accordance with the procedures set out above. The Department for Education published dedicated non-statutory guidance on preventing and tackling bullying and harassment of school staff on 9 July 2026.

**Parental support**
Most concerns about bullying will be resolved through discussion between home and the School. However, where a parent feels their concerns have not been resolved, they are encouraged to use the Complaints Procedure.

Where a pupil is involved in bullying outside of the School e.g. in the street or through the use of the internet at home, parents will be asked to work with the School in addressing their child's behaviour, for example: restricting/monitoring their use of the internet or mobile phone.
A referral of the family to external support agencies will be made where appropriate.

**2.5 Preventative Measures**

The School will:

- Raise awareness of the nature of bullying through inclusion in Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE), Tutor time, assemblies, subject areas and informal discussion, as appropriate, in attempt to eradicate such behaviour.
- Participate in national and local initiatives such as Anti-Bullying week.
- Seek to develop links with the wider community that will support inclusive anti-bullying education.
- Consider the use of specific strategies, for example: peer mentoring on a regular basis and implement them as appropriate, subject to available resources.

**2.6 Promotion of this policy**

The policy and methods for reporting bullying concerns will be promoted throughout the School; for example, information packs for new pupils and staff and through regular awareness raising activities with pupils and their families.

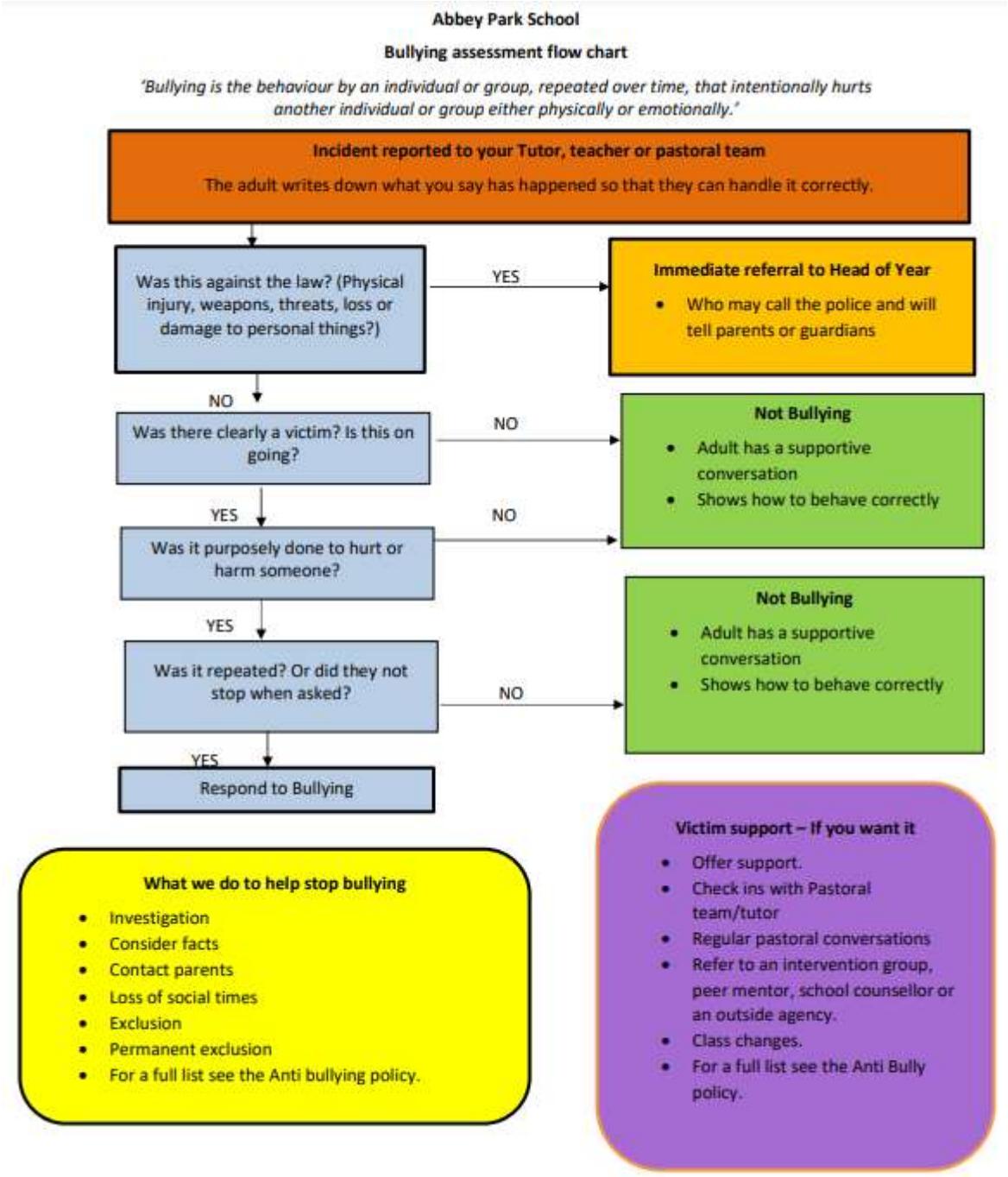
**2.7 Monitoring, evaluation and review**

The Vice Principal for Pastoral and Inclusion will lead on the implementation of the policy and act as the link person with the Local Authority.

They will regularly monitor any bullying incidents and monitor the results of all incidents, the actions taken and the associated outcomes.

The School will review the policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness

## 3. Appendices



**Appendix B**

**Cyberbullying and safety**

1. Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using technology.

2. Pupils should remember the following:

- use the security settings;
- regularly change your password and keep it private;
- always respect others - be careful what you say online and what images you send;
- think before you send - whatever you send can be made public very quickly and could stay online forever;
- if you or someone you know are being cyberbullied, tell someone. You have the right not to be harassed or bullied online. Tell an adult you trust - your parents or carers, any member of staff or volunteer or a helpline such as ChildLine on 0800 1111;
- don't retaliate or reply online;
- save the evidence - learn how to keep records of offending messages, pictures or online conversations. Ask someone if you are unsure how to do this. This will help to show what is happening and can be used by the School to investigate the matter;
- block the bully. Most social media websites and online or mobile services allow you block someone who is behaving badly;
- don't do nothing - if you see cyberbullying going on, support the victim and report the bullying.

3. You may find the following websites helpful: 3.1

http://www.childnet.com/young-people

https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/

https://www.childline.org.uk/Explore/Bullying/Pages/online-bullying.aspx.