

Annan School

Anti-Bullying Policy

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ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Introduction

- The school is committed to providing a safe, welcoming and respectful environment in which every child can learn, play and develop without fear of bullying. Bullying is unacceptable and will be addressed promptly and proportionately.
- The DfE defines bullying as 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 or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. Bullying may involve an imbalance of power and can take place in person or online.
- The school recognises that not every harmful incident meets the definition of bullying. A single incident may nevertheless be serious and may amount to child-on-child abuse or another safeguarding concern. Such concerns will be responded to under the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, as well as any relevant behaviour procedures.

References

- This policy reflects the DfE guidance:
 - ***Preventing and tackling bullying advice*** (DfE) July 2026 (update)
 - ***Behaviour and discipline in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff*** (DfE) February 2024
 - ***Keeping Children Safe in Education*** (KCSIE) 2026 edition
- The policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies of which it is an integral part:
 - **Behaviour and Positive Relationships Policy**
 - **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**
 - **Exclusion Policy**

Aims and objectives

Bullying is wrong and damages individual children. At school we do all we can to prevent it, by developing a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable.

We aim as a school to:

- Provide a safe and secure environment where children can learn and play without anxiety about bullying.
- Prevent bullying so far as reasonably practicable through an effective, consistently implemented strategy.
- Promote kindness, respect, inclusion, empathy and safe ways of resolving disagreements.
- Ensure children know how to seek help and that adults will listen and take concerns seriously.
- Respond consistently, promptly and fairly to reported incidents, taking account of children's ages, needs and circumstances.
- Support children who have experienced harm and children whose behaviour has caused harm, while maintaining safety and accountability.
- Work in partnership with parents and, where appropriate, external agencies.

This policy aims to produce a consistent school response to any bullying incidents that may occur. We aim to make all those connected with the school aware of our opposition towards bullying, and we make clear each person's responsibilities with regard to any reports of bullying at school.

It is the responsibility of all within the school to maintain the ethos and behaviour boundaries which have been agreed. Children need good models from adults, from which they may develop their own self-discipline. We are committed to:

- Promoting respectful communication
- Focusing on what is going well
- Giving plenty of praise and drawing attention to good behaviour
- Making clear that it is the unacceptable behaviour we do not like – not the child

- Giving clear and regular reminders of what is expected
- Providing restorative support for children who have experienced harm and children whose behaviour has caused harm, aiming to educate and change behaviour rather than punish

Forms of Bullying

- **Verbal bullying:** name calling, teasing, use of threatening or provocative language, etc;
- **Psychological bullying:** excluding an individual from group play, refusing to talk to or even acknowledge an individual; spreading rumours
- **Physical bullying:** hitting, kicking, grabbing an individual; taking, hiding or damaging another's property etc.
- **Cyber-bullying:** The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying which can happen 24/7, with a potentially bigger audience, and rapid dissemination.
- **Sexual harassment:** unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, which can include sexualised comments or name-calling, sexual jokes or gestures, unwanted sexual attention, sharing or threatening to share sexual images, including AI generated, and unwanted touching. Such behaviour must be taken seriously and addressed in an age-appropriate manner. Sexual harassment may occur as part of bullying, but it may also constitute child-on-child abuse in its own right, including as a single incident.
- **Prejudice-based bullying:** targeting based on protected characteristics or perceived differences.

Child-on-child abuse, including harassment and violence

The school recognises that children can harm other children, in person or online. Child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding concern and may occur as a single incident or as repeated behaviour. While bullying commonly involves repeated behaviour intended to hurt another person, any suspected abuse, harassment or violence must be taken seriously.

Staff must not dismiss harmful behaviour as "banter" or "just a joke". Any safeguarding concern must be reported promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL and managed in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the current *Keeping Children Safe in Education* guidance.

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate through words, behaviour or changes in their usual presentation that they are being bullied or otherwise harmed. Possible signs include:

- Reluctance or anxiety about coming to school, travelling to school or taking part in particular activities.
- Withdrawal, anxiety, loss of confidence, sadness, irritability or changes in friendships.
- Unexplained injuries, damaged or missing possessions, or repeated requests for money.
- Feels ill in the morning, lack of eye contact, stammering.
- Changes in attendance, concentration, learning, sleep or appetite.
- Physical complaints, distress before school or reluctance to use devices or online services.
- Aggressive, disruptive or unusually withdrawn behaviour, including bullying others.
- Fear of speaking about an incident, or giving explanations that do not appear to fit what has happened.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated. Support for the child whose behaviour has caused harm is also important, as they may need support to change their behaviour or may be experiencing abuse themselves.

Dealing with Bullying

The school will respond to reported or observed bullying promptly. The response will be proportionate to the seriousness, context, impact and frequency of the behaviour and will take account of the age and needs of the children involved. The school will:

- Have clear policies in place to deal with bullying and inappropriate behaviour which are clear to parents, children and staff so that, when incidents do occur, they are dealt with quickly;
- Listen carefully to the child raising the concern and take the report seriously.

- Take immediate steps to protect children from further harm where necessary.
- Establish the relevant facts fairly and sensitively. Where the concern may involve abuse, staff should follow the safeguarding process and not undertake an independent staff investigation.
- Record the concern and action taken in the appropriate way – most likely on an incident record form.
- Inform the DSL or Deputy DSL where there is a safeguarding concern, a serious incident, a pattern of behaviour, or uncertainty about the appropriate response.
- Inform parents or carers where appropriate, while taking account of safeguarding advice and the best interests and safety of each child.
- Decide on appropriate support, educational action, supervision or sanctions in line with the Behaviour Policy.
- Follow up with the children involved to check whether the behaviour has stopped and whether further support or action is needed.

The school will not assume that a child's account is unreliable because of their age, communication needs or difficulty explaining what happened. Children will be given an age-appropriate opportunity to express their views and will be supported to do so.

Incidents occurring off site or online may still require school action where they affect pupils' safety, welfare or school life. The school will act within its responsibilities and seek advice or refer to external agencies where appropriate.

The school aims to create an ethos of good behaviour where children treat one another and the school staff with respect and have a clear understanding of how their actions affect others.

The school will use restorative approaches where appropriate, and support will be provided for children who have experienced harm and children whose behaviour has caused harm, including referral to external agencies where appropriate. A child who has experienced harm will not be required to confront another child or take part in a joint restorative process where this could expose them to further harm or distress.

Roles and responsibilities

The Principal will:

- Ensure the anti-bullying strategy is implemented and that staff understand their responsibilities.
- Ensure staff, including non-teaching and lunchtime staff, receive suitable induction and ongoing training to recognise and respond to bullying and child-on-child abuse.
- Promote a culture of respect, inclusion and mutual support, and ensure incidents are reviewed and appropriate action is taken.
- Work with the DSL to ensure safeguarding concerns are managed under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Ensure that all children know that bullying is wrong, and that it is unacceptable behaviour in this school. They draw the attention of children to this fact at suitable moments. For example, if an incident occurs, the Principal may decide to use a gathering or circle time to discuss with other children why this behaviour was wrong.
- The Principal of the school sets the school climate of mutual support so making bullying less likely. When children feel they are important and belong to a friendly and welcoming school, bullying is far less likely to be part of their behaviour. The Principal is responsible for ensuring all staff promote respectful communication between staff and children as well as between staff and between children.

The DSL and Deputy DSL will:

- Receive and assess safeguarding concerns, including child-on-child abuse, and ensure that appropriate safeguarding procedures are followed.
- Ensure referrals, risk assessments, protective measures, records and follow-up are completed as appropriate.
- Advise staff where it is unclear whether an incident is a behaviour matter, bullying or a safeguarding concern.
- Monitor patterns and liaise with the Principal and relevant external agencies as necessary.
- Evaluate and update 'acceptable use' policies for computers and the school internet use.

Teachers and other staff will:

- Take all forms of bullying seriously, and seek to prevent it from taking place.
- Be aware of the school's Safeguarding Policy and the latest child on child abuse guidance in KCSIE and what to do if they believe that the bullying may need to be referred to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- Be familiar with the school's Behaviour and Positive Relationships Policy
- Take reports of bullying seriously and respond promptly. Report safeguarding concerns to the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay and not investigate suspected abuse themselves. Other bullying incidents should be handled in accordance with this policy and the Behaviour and Positive Relationships Policy.
- Avoid language that labels children permanently as 'bullies', 'victims' or 'perpetrators'; and describe behaviour accurately and sensitively.
- When any bullying has taken place between members of a class, the teacher will deal with the issue immediately. This may involve support for the child who has experienced harm as well as time spent talking to the child whose behaviour has caused harm, helping them to understand why their action was wrong and how they should change their behaviour in future. The Principal should be informed.
- Use a range of methods to help prevent bullying and to establish a climate of trust and respect for all. Circle time is used to praise, reward and celebrate the success of all children, and thus to help create a positive atmosphere.
- Model respectful communication and maintain a climate in which children feel safe asking for help.
- Treat one another with respect so that appropriate models of behaviour are recognised by the children. If an adult feels bullied by another parent or a member of staff this should be reported to the Principal.

Parents and Carers will:

- Encourage their child to treat others respectfully and to tell an adult when something is wrong.
- Contact the child's class teacher if they are concerned their child is being bullied or may have harmed another child.
- If the concern is not resolved, raise it with the Principal in accordance with the school's procedures.
- Work constructively with the school while respecting the privacy and safeguarding needs of all children involved.
- Parents have a responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying policy, actively encouraging their child to be a positive member of the school;

The role of children at our school

- Treat others with kindness and respect and follow the school's behaviour expectations.
- Tell a trusted adult if they are being bullied, feel unsafe or are worried about another child.
- Report concerns even if they happened online or outside school, and understand that it is not their responsibility to investigate or stop abuse themselves.
- Understand that adults will listen to them and take concerns seriously.

Sanctions for incidents of bullying

Sanctions for bullying will be applied in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy and will be proportionate to the circumstances. They may include appropriate consequences, increased supervision, behaviour support, parental meetings, restrictions or exclusion where justified under the school's policies.

Support may include regular check-ins, pastoral support, changes to supervision or routines, help to rebuild safe peer relationships, or referral to external services where appropriate. Parents or carers will be involved where appropriate, taking account of safeguarding advice and the best interests of the children.

The school will check whether the behaviour has stopped and whether children feel safe. Where incidents recur, the school will review its response and consider whether further safeguarding action, support, risk assessment or escalation is needed. Restorative practice will be used only where safe and appropriate.

Prevention and age-appropriate teaching

The school will teach children, in ways appropriate to their age, maturity, communication needs and stage of development, how to build respectful friendships, recognise unkind or unsafe behaviour, seek help and report concerns.

- Help children distinguish between an ordinary disagreement, unkind behaviour, repeated bullying and behaviour that makes someone feel unsafe.
- Teach simple, practical strategies: say 'stop' if it feels safe, move away, tell a trusted adult, and keep telling an adult until someone helps.
- Make clear that children are not in trouble for asking for help or reporting something that worries them, even if they are unsure what to call it.
- Teach kindness, inclusion, empathy, respect for differences, safe boundaries, privacy and how to treat other people's bodies and belongings respectfully.
- Use age-appropriate online-safety teaching about kind messages, group chats and games, not sharing passwords or personal information, blocking/reporting harmful contact, and telling an adult about upsetting messages or images.
- Explain in simple age-appropriate terms that no one should pressure a child to touch, show or photograph private parts, ask them to keep an unsafe secret, or share pictures of someone's private body parts.
- Teach children to tell a trusted adult if someone uses sexual words or gestures, touches them in a way they do not like, asks for or shares private pictures, threatens them, or makes them feel unsafe.
- Challenge racist, disablist, misogynistic or other discriminatory language and behaviour calmly and clearly, using age-appropriate examples or language.
- Provide several routes for seeking help, including the class teacher, another trusted member of staff, the DSL or Deputy DSL, and an appropriate way to report a concern if the child does not feel able to speak to their usual adult.

The school does not expect children to manage bullying or abuse alone. Adults remain responsible for listening, assessing concerns, protecting children and taking appropriate action.

See ***Further Sources of Information*** on page 7.

Monitoring and review

This policy is monitored by the Proprietors and staff of the school and will be reviewed for changes in procedures and statutory guidelines in accordance with the school's annual policy reviews.

Appendix: Recommended Organisations & Resources for Anti-Bullying Support

This appendix provides a list of specialist organisations, charities, and support services that offer guidance, resources, and assistance relating to bullying, safeguarding, online safety, inclusion, and pupil wellbeing.

General Anti-Bullying Organisations

Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA)

A national coalition offering research-based guidance, training, and resources to prevent and respond to bullying in schools. Website: <https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk>

Kidscape

Provides practical support, training programmes, and resources aimed at empowering children and families to prevent and tackle bullying. Website: <https://kidscape.org.uk>

Child Protection & Support for Children

Childline (NSPCC)

A free, confidential helpline and online service offering counselling and support for children experiencing bullying or emotional difficulty. Website: <https://www.childline.org.uk>

NSPCC

National charity providing safeguarding resources and guidance for schools, parents, and children. Website: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk>

Cyberbullying & Online Safety

Childnet International

Specialist advice and teaching materials on online safety, cyberbullying, and responsible digital behaviour. Website: <https://www.childnet.com>

Internet Matters

Resources for families and schools focused on online safety, digital wellbeing, and protecting children from cyberbullying. Website: <https://www.internetmatters.org>

LGBT+ Support

Barnardo's (LGBTQ+ Support Services)

Provides equality resources, practical guidance, and training for schools supporting LGBTQ+ pupils. Website: <https://www.barnardos.org.uk>

Stonewall

Leading advocacy and education charity offering resources on LGBT+ inclusion, anti-bullying strategies, and school training. Website: <https://www.stonewall.org.uk>

SEND / Additional Needs Support

Mencap

Offers advice, support, and practical guidance for children with learning disabilities, including preventing bullying of SEND pupils. Website: <https://www.mencap.org.uk>

National Autistic Society

Provides information and resources to support autistic children and prevent autism-related bullying. Website: <https://www.autism.org.uk>

Emotional Wellbeing & Wider Safeguarding

Young Minds

Mental health charity supporting children and families, with guidance on the impact of bullying and emotional wellbeing. Website: <https://www.youngminds.org.uk>

The Diana Award Anti-Bullying Programme

Provides anti-bullying training, school resources, and peer mentoring initiatives to support positive school culture. Website: <https://www.antibullyingpro.com>