

GARSTANG ST THOMAS CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

POLICY: ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Rationale

Everyone at Garstang St Thomas Church of England Primary School has the right to feel welcome, secure and happy. The aim of the anti-bullying policy is to ensure that pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied.

Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

This policy applies to bullying involving pupils whether it happens in school, during school activities, on the journey to or from school, online, or outside school where the behaviour affects a pupil's wellbeing or the orderly running of the school.

Objectives of this policy:

- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All governors and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a school we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- **Bullying will not be tolerated.**

Definition

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. It often involves an imbalance of power, making it difficult for the person experiencing bullying to defend themselves. Bullying may happen face to face, online, on school premises, on the journey to and from school, or outside school where it affects school life. A single incident may not meet the definition of bullying but may still be serious and will be addressed appropriately in accordance with the school's behaviour and safeguarding procedures.

Bullying can include, but is not limited to:

- Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist: racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual or sexist bullying, including unwanted physical contact, sexualised language, sexually abusive comments, sexual harassment or sexual violence. Any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment will be managed in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education and the school's safeguarding procedures.
- Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours and teasing.
- Online or technology-assisted bullying, including abusive messages, social media posts, group chats, image sharing, gaming platforms, impersonation, exclusion from online groups, threats, or the misuse of photographs, video or artificial intelligence tools. Online bullying will be treated as seriously as bullying that happens in person.
- Prejudice-based bullying linked to protected characteristics or perceived differences, including race, religion or belief, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment,

pregnancy or maternity, special educational needs, appearance, family circumstances, care experience or any other vulnerability.

Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming withdrawn or anxious, appearing unwell, avoiding particular places or people, changing attendance patterns, or seeking closer contact with adults. Pupils must be encouraged to report bullying in school.

Statutory duty of schools

Schools have a legal duty to have measures in their behaviour policy to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying among pupils. This duty is set out in section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. The school must also have due regard to the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty, Keeping Children Safe in Education, statutory guidance on behaviour, attendance, suspensions and permanent exclusions, and relevant online safety guidance. Where bullying raises a safeguarding concern, staff must follow the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures and inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Reporting and recording bullying concerns

Pupils, parents, carers and staff are encouraged to report bullying concerns as soon as possible. Reports may be made to any member of staff, the class teacher, the Senior Leadership Team or the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Concerns will be recorded on CPOMS, monitored for patterns and followed up so that pupils know what action has been taken. Records will identify any prejudice-related element and any safeguarding concern.

Information about bullying concerns will be shared only with staff and external agencies who need to know in order to safeguard pupils, investigate the concern, support those involved and meet the school's legal duties. Pupils will be listened to sensitively and kept informed as appropriate.

Pupils may report bullying verbally, in writing, through a trusted adult, through worry boxes or other agreed pupil voice systems, or with help from a parent, carer or friend. Staff will take all reports seriously, including concerns raised by pupils who witness bullying.

The following steps may be taken when dealing with incidents:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached.
- Each pupil will be given the opportunity to talk following a report or concern.
- A member of the Senior Leadership Team, and the Designated Safeguarding Lead where appropriate, will investigate, record the incident on CPOMS and agree next steps.
- Staff will listen carefully to each pupil, avoid making assumptions before the facts are established, and focus discussions on safety, support and preventing further bullying.
- Discussions will focus on finding a solution to prevent the bullying from recurring.
- Racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, sexist, sexual, disability-related or other prejudice-related bullying will be recorded and monitored as such.
- Parents or carers of pupils directly involved will usually be informed and, where appropriate, invited to meet with school staff to agree support and next steps.
- If there is a safeguarding concern, criminal offence, threat of serious harm, online abuse or harassment, the school will seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead and, where necessary, external agencies including children's social care or the police.
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
- An attempt will be made to help the pupil or pupils displaying bullying behaviour to understand the impact of their actions and change their behaviour.

- Sanctions will be used proportionately and in line with the school's behaviour policy, alongside restorative and educational work to address the causes and impact of the behaviour.

Bullying and safeguarding

Bullying may be a safeguarding issue, particularly where there is child-on-child abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment, exploitation, abuse, hate-related behaviour, repeated online harm, serious threats, self-harm indicators or concerns about a pupil's safety or wellbeing. Staff must be alert to the fact that some pupils may be more vulnerable to bullying, including pupils with SEND, pupils who are young carers, pupils who are looked after or previously looked after, pupils who are absent from education, pupils experiencing mental health difficulties and pupils who may be targeted because of a protected characteristic or perceived difference.

Support

The school will support pupils who have experienced bullying, pupils who have displayed bullying behaviour and pupils who have witnessed bullying by offering immediate opportunities to talk, providing reassurance and ongoing support, working to restore self-esteem and confidence, exploring why the behaviour happened, establishing what needs to change and involving parents or carers where appropriate.

Where bullying has had a significant impact on a pupil's attendance, mental health, safety or ability to learn, the school will consider additional support, including pastoral support, SEND support, Early Help, referral to external agencies or safeguarding action.

The following actions may be taken:

- Clear warnings and behaviour targets to prevent further bullying.
- Restorative approaches may be considered where appropriate, safe and agreed by those involved.
- Supervised reflection time or time away from peers, where appropriate and in line with the school's behaviour policy.
- Internal sanctions, loss of privileges or supervised time away from peers, where appropriate.
- Suspension, where the threshold is met and in line with statutory guidance.
- Permanent exclusion, only where lawful, reasonable and proportionate.

After the incident or incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure that bullying does not continue or recur. Monitoring may include check-ins with pupils, communication with parents or carers, review of CPOMS records and adjustments to supervision or support where needed.

Prevention

We will use a range of methods to help children prevent and respond to bullying. As appropriate, these may include:

- Writing class rules (see behaviour policy).
- Pupil leadership and peer-support systems will help pupils understand how to raise concerns with trusted adults.
- Younger children's play is supported by older pupils through the buddy system.
- Activities in class based on bullying.
- Reading stories about bullying or having them read to a class or in assembly.
- Having discussions about bullying and why it matters.
- Each year, we will have an anti-bullying week to raise awareness of bullying.

Within the curriculum, the school will raise awareness of the nature and impact of bullying through PSHE, class time, assemblies and subject areas, as appropriate, to help prevent and challenge bullying behaviour.

Online safety education will include how to recognise online bullying, how to seek help, how to behave respectfully online, how to report harmful content or contact and how online actions can affect others. This will be taught through PSHE, computing, relationships education, assemblies and pastoral work as appropriate.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

The school will review this policy annually, and sooner if statutory guidance or school practice changes. The Senior Leadership Team and governors will monitor bullying records to identify patterns, including prejudice-related incidents, online bullying, repeat incidents, locations, times and groups of pupils who may be more vulnerable. Governors will receive appropriate summary information to support oversight while protecting pupil confidentiality. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school and linked to the behaviour policy, safeguarding and child protection policy, online safety policy, SEND policy and equality information and objectives.

Further sources of advice and support include:

- Anti-Bullying Alliance – advice and resources for schools, families and pupils.
<https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>
- Kidscape – advice and support for children, families and schools affected by bullying.
<https://www.kidscape.org.uk/>
- Childline – confidential support and advice for children and young people.
<https://www.childline.org.uk/>
- CEOP Education – online safety information and support for children, families and professionals.
<https://www.ceopeducation.co.uk/>