



**The
Whitstable
School**

Swale
ACADEMIES
TRUST

Anti-Bullying Policy

2025-26

Equalities Statement

In our Trust we work to ensure that there is equality of opportunity for all members of our community who hold a range of protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, as well as having regard to other factors which have the potential to cause inequality, such as, socio- economic factors. For further information, please see our Equalities Policy.

Document Management

Date Approved: 20 January 2026

Date Reviewed: December 2025 / January 2026

Next review date: June 2026

Approved by: Local Governing Board

Responsible for review: Mr A Holmes

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1. Statement of Intent

At The Whitstable School we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students. Students have a right to learn and play without fear, violence, intimidation or harassment. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur all students should feel able to let staff know and be confident that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who witnesses bullying is expected to report it.

This policy is based on DfE guidance “Preventing and Tackling Bullying” July 2017 and supporting documents. It also considers the DfE statutory guidance “Keeping Children Safe in Education” and ‘Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges’ guidance’.

The setting has also read Childnet’s “Cyberbullying: Understand, Prevent and Respond: Guidance for Schools”. www.gov.uk/government/publications/approaches-to-preventing-and-tackling-bullying.

2. Aims

At The Whitstable School we take all forms of conflict, friendship problems and bullying behaviour seriously.

Our aims are:

- to provide a safe and secure environment for all children in our care
- to create a happy atmosphere in which both parents and staff work together for the welfare of the students
- to ensure everyone is mutually valued and respected regardless of gender, race, age, beliefs and ability
- to encourage children to adopt agreed standards of behaviour and values, develop a sense of self-discipline and take responsibility for their actions
- to provide an environment where every child can feel able to contribute to future economic well-being.

3. Links to legislation

There are several pieces of legislation which set out measures and actions for schools in response to bullying, as well as criminal and civil law. These may include (but are not limited to):

- The Education and Inspection Act 2006, 2011.
- The Equality Act 2010.
- The Children Act 1989.
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997.
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988.
- The Online Safety Act 2023.

- Public Order Act 1986.

Relevant statutory guidance includes:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025
- Preventing & Tackling Bullying (Updated)

The legislative landscape for anti bullying is also expected to be significantly strengthened by new legislation and upcoming guidance relating to anti bullying and restrictive interventions over the coming months.

4. Definition of Bullying Behaviour

We acknowledge that both friendship problems and bullying behaviour can be upsetting and unpleasant but it is important to distinguish between the two, as the responses to friendship problems will be different to the strategies used to address bullying behaviour.

Friendship problems may be an occasional incident where both children disagree and find it difficult to resolve the disagreement without adult help. It is unlikely to be repeated behaviour and may even be accidental, where both children make an effort to resolve the problem. However, we recognise that repeated friendship problems can sometimes lead to bullying behaviour.

Bullying behaviour is defined as – “The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person by another (s) where the relationship involves an imbalance of power.” (Anti-bullying Alliance 2011) Essentially, it is when someone deliberately sets out to hurt another person on more than one occasion. All children have upsets and disputes; these are not classed as bullying and are dealt with through the school’s positive behaviour policy. The policy will refer to ‘the person bullying’ and ‘the person being bullied’ rather than ‘bully’ and ‘victim’, both of which can be defined as negative labelling. Bullying can take many forms:

- **Emotional** – being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
- **Physical** – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- **Racist** – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, or religious discrimination of any kind
- **Sexual** – unwanted physical contact, sexual harassment, sexism, or sexually abusive comments
- **Homophobic** – because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- **Verbal** – name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- **Cyber** – all areas of the internet, such as email and internet chat room misuse. Mobile threats by text messaging and calls. Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities and social media messaging/posting
- **Disability/SEN** – because of or focusing on a disability or special educational need. Home circumstance – targeting individuals who are looked after children or because of a particular home circumstance

Some bullying is done because a child is deemed to belong to a certain group. This has been labelled 'prejudice-based bullying' and includes homophobic, transphobic or biphobic bullying, racist bullying, sexual or gender bullying, and bullying of students with learning or other disabilities.

Types of cyber-bullying:

- **Flaming:** online fights usually through emails, instant messaging or chat rooms where angry and rude comments are exchanged
- **Denigration:** putting unkind online messages through email, instant messaging, chat rooms, or websites set up to make fun of someone
- **Exclusion:** intentionally leaving someone out of a group such as instant messaging, friend sites, or other online group activities
- **Outing:** sharing secrets about someone online including private information, pictures, and videos.

Bullying can therefore constitute any of the above activities within the context of the definition provided. Bullying may occur to anyone and this policy is inclusive of the bullying of school staff, whether by students, parents/carers or other staff. (Members of the school workforce suffering from or concerned about bullying may also contact their trade union or professional association for support and advice). Bullying should also be seen in acts of sexism and continual condescending, inappropriate and unwanted comments or attention due to a child or adult's gender.

Bullying can seriously damage a person's confidence and sense of self-worth, and they will often feel that they are at fault in some way. Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness or taking unusual absences. There may be evidence in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school. These signs and symptoms may indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated. Bullying can happen to anyone.

This policy covers all types and forms of bullying including:

- Bullying related to physical appearance
- Bullying of young carers, children in care or otherwise related to home circumstances
- Bullying related to physical/mental health conditions
- Physical bullying
- Emotional bullying
- Sexual bullying
- Prejudicial bullying (against people/students with protected characteristics)
- Bullying related to race, religion, faith and belief and for those without faith or ethnicity, nationality or culture
- Bullying related to Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND)
- Bullying related to sexual orientation (homophobic/biphobic bullying)
- Gender based bullying, including transphobic bullying
- Bullying against teenage parents (pregnancy and maternity under the Equality Act)

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The Education Act 2002, Education and Inspections Act and Equalities Act 2006 all make reference to a school's legal responsibility to prevent and tackle bullying. By law, all state schools must have a behaviour policy in place and displayed on their website and must also follow anti-discrimination law. This means staff must act to prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation within the school. Additionally, The Whitstable School has developed this Anti-Bullying Policy; a copy of which is available from the school office and on the school website for parents, staff and pupils to access when and as they wish.

Schools have the legal power to make sure pupils behave and do not bully outside of school premises, for example on public transport or in nearby public communal areas. If seen as appropriate, the Headteacher or staff can choose to report bullying to the police or local council. During school hours, including while pupils are taking part in school visits and after school clubs, the school has direct responsibility to ensure children feel safe and secure.

The role of Governors

The governing body supports the Headteacher in all attempts to eliminate bullying from the school. The governing body will not condone any bullying and all incidents of bullying that do occur will be taken very seriously and dealt with appropriately.

The governing body monitors incidents of bullying that do occur and reviews the effectiveness of this policy regularly. The governors require the Headteacher to keep accurate records of all incidents of bullying and to report to the governors on request about the effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying strategies.

A parent/carer who is dissatisfied with the way the school has dealt with a bullying incident can make a formal written complaint to the Headteacher. If still not satisfied, the complaint may be escalated to the Chair of Governors. The complaint will be dealt with in accordance with the Swale complaints policy, which can be accessed from the school's website.

The role of the Headteacher

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to implement the school's anti-bullying strategy, to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the school policy and that they know how to identify and deal with incidents of bullying. The Headteacher will report to the governing body about the effectiveness of this policy on request.

It is the Headteacher who must ensure that all children know that bullying is wrong, and that it is unacceptable behaviour in school. The Headteacher will draw the attention of children to this fact at suitable moments. For example, the Headteacher may decide to use an assembly as the forum in which to discuss with the children why bullying is wrong. The Headteacher will ensure that all members of staff receive sufficient training to be equipped to identify and deal with all incidents of bullying. The leadership team will set the school climate of mutual support and praise for success, 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 role of the staff

Members of staff will do all that they can to eradicate bullying; they will ensure that they follow this policy.

Staff will use a range of methods to help prevent bullying and to establish a climate of trust and respect for all. They will use assemblies, themed weeks and personal development time within the curriculum to help pupils understand the feelings of bullied children and to practice the restraint required to avoid lapsing into bullying behaviour. Ring-fenced time will also be used to praise, reward and celebrate the successes of all children, and thus to help create a positive atmosphere.

Members of staff will keep a vigilant watch on suspected 'person(s) bullying'; any incidents will be handled carefully. It is important that the child responsible for initiating the bullying is dealt with appropriately. If an allegation of bullying has been made against a pupil or a member of staff has observed bullying behaviour, they need to report the incident to the Pastoral Support Manager. The incident will then be investigated and all the relevant information collected, to inform an appropriate sanction if any. All cases are individual and various strategies will be employed by the senior leadership team to address the issue, taking children's needs into account. Teachers and support staff will do all they can to support a child who is being bullied.

The role of parents/carers

Parents/carers who are concerned that their child might be being bullied or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact their child's tutor immediately. If they are not satisfied with the action taken they should contact the Pastoral Team. If they remain dissatisfied, they should raise their concern with the Headteacher. If the matter remains unresolved, a formal written complaint should be made to the Headteacher. The school's complaints policy should be followed thereafter. (This can be found on the school's website).

Parents/carers have a responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying policy by actively encouraging their child to be a positive member of the school and this expectation of support is outlined in the home/school agreement.

The role of pupils

Pupils are encouraged to tell somebody they trust if they are being bullied and if the bullying continues they must share this information again. The children are taught a number of strategies to help them with this. Pupils are also encouraged to participate fully in activities that raise their awareness about bullying in order that they clearly understand what to do if they, or another child, are being bullied.

6. Strategies for Preventing Bullying Behaviour

Whole-school approach

- The Whitstable School employs the Five Point anti-bullying plan. Pupils recognise the responses to bullying and using the plan, how to report it. The plan covers identifying, reporting, responding and responsibilities within bullying. (Appendix A).
- Issues surrounding friendships and bullying behaviour are taught through the Personal Development curriculum, Citizenship curriculum and mentor time. Children are taught to explore some of the ups and downs of relationships, including the positive aspects and benefits of friendships and the negative aspects of relational conflict.
- Whole school assemblies delivered in year groups, Personal Development Mentoring, Pupil Voice and Pupil Parliament all give managed opportunities to discuss bullying and raise children's awareness of what bullying looks like and how they can respond.
- Personal Development and Mentor Time provides opportunities for more detailed discussions and activities to explore the nature of bullying.
- Pupil Voice sessions and Pupil Parliament will provide a forum for discussing any bullying issues and for the children to decide ways of preventing it and supporting those who are bullied.
- All staff will monitor behaviour and intervene when it becomes inappropriate, to prevent bullying from developing. Staff on break and lunch duty will inform the Pastoral team of any incidents.
- A number of pupils are selected to become Ant-bully buddies and are central to supporting peers with any bullying instances that may occur.

Some suggested approaches to dealing with situations

- No blame approach
- Peer mediation
- Behaviour Contract
- Restorative mediation
- Peer advocacy
- Involvement of the Police Clinic
- Referrals to external agencies where appropriate

7. Strategies for Responding to Bullying Behaviour

Where bullying does occur, this will be followed by an immediate and appropriate response, including the use of disciplinary sanctions where necessary.

Early identification is the most effective way to minimise bullying behaviour and the effects on the person being bullied. We also acknowledge that the person doing the bullying needs to understand that their behaviour is unacceptable and must stop. They may also need support to change their behaviour and explore the underlying reasons for bullying.

Children are encouraged to report any negative behaviour, even if they are not sure whether it is bullying. They can do this through speaking to:

- their Progress Leaders or Pastoral Support Managers
- their Mentor
- their teacher / or any member of support staff
- a parent / other adults who then may contact the school
- their Pupil Parliament Representative
- Peer Mentors
- Anti - Bully Buddies

When bullying is known to have happened or ongoing

Any member of staff who is aware of any pupil who is being bullied or is bullying should consult the Pastoral Team, who will investigate the incident.

The Pastoral Team will discuss the incident with the person being bullied. It is important that this person is listened to and believed.

The incident will then be discussed with the person described as bullying. Information will be gathered from witnesses to explain what they saw.

The Pastoral team will liaise with SLT, Progress Leaders and/or the Headteacher to identify a course of action and explore possible resolutions. Any response will also take into account any previous events.

Possible sanctions include, but are not limited to:

- meetings with parents/carers
- official warnings to cease offending or withdrawal of certain school privileges
- 'Restorative' meeting, mediated with a member of staff
- Education on the impacts of the incident
- Pastoral support provision
- Off site isolation
- Support of the Police Clinic
- fixed-term suspension
- Directed time out placement
- permanent exclusion.

Records will be kept on students' files.

Where a child or a group of children denies any involvement in bullying behaviour the children concerned will be observed and monitored. The person being bullied may be asked to record and report any incidents which cause them concern.

For the person(s) being bullied

Mentor, Pastoral Team and peer mentoring will also offer support, either on an individual or a group basis to the person(s) being bullied and will work to promote resilience and protective behaviour.

Identification of friendships – establishing a network of friends in a child’s class can prove invaluable support for the person(s) being bullied. This can be arranged through Pastoral Support managers.

Identification of safe spaces - Pupils are able to identify a safe space where they will be monitored and they and a small number of friends will be able to access should they wish to.

Moving teaching groups – this can be used as a last resort but should not be implemented without some additional support. If the person being bullied moves it should be at their request.

8. How to Report Bullying

- Contact the Pastoral team for the relevant year group
- Speak to any member of staff
- Contact us through safetext.
- Report it to a Anti- Bully Buddy

If bullying is not confirmed:

If the allegation of bullying is not confirmed, the incident will be recorded as ‘resolved.’ Pupils will be asked to report any further issues directly to Pastoral staff.

9. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

- This policy will be reviewed every year. This is so that it remains up to date, useful and relevant. We will also regularly review this policy in accordance with new Government and local guidance, national policy changes and the views of the whole-school community.
- Governors, the Headteacher and relevant staff will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.
- A pupil survey will review the effectiveness of the policy throughout the year and the information gathered will be given to the senior leadership team for their consideration.
- A record of all such incidents will be kept on the assigned logs and on the children’s files.
- The numbers of incidents will be reported to governors upon request.
- Bullying data will be analysed to reflect and redesign further strategies to improve procedures.

- The Headteacher will monitor bullying incidents in relation to the school's child protection records to determine if any incidents of bullying may indicate a wider safeguarding issue.

10. Key Messages to Students on Bullying

1. Conflict Resolution and Safety

While we discourage students from approaching or escalating a conflict directly (**Do Not Approach**), we expect students to **allow adults and Pastoral Support Managers (PSM) to sort out** disputes. This ensures a safe, mediated resolution for everyone involved.

2. Physical Boundaries

We maintain a zero-tolerance stance on **unwanted physical contact**. Instead, all members of the school community are expected to respect personal space and **keep our hands and feet to ourselves**.

3. Respectful Communication

To prevent the harm caused by **name-calling**, we foster a culture of respect where we **use people's names** correctly and treat one another with dignity in all verbal interactions.

4. Respect for Environment and Belongings

Bullying includes the **touching or interference of others' personal property**. We promote responsibility by expecting students to **look after our own property** and respect the items belonging to their peers.

5. Digital Citizenship

TWS does not tolerate **online abuse, rumor spreading, shaming, or 'adding to harass.'** We expect our students to be responsible digital citizens who choose to **be positive online** and protect the school's community in virtual spaces.

11. Useful links and Supporting Organisations

Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

Childline: www.childline.org.uk

Family Lives: www.familylives.org.uk

Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk

MindEd: www.minded.org.uk

NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk

The BIG Award: www.bullyinginterventiongroup.co.uk/index.php

PSHE Association: www.pshe-association.org.uk

Restorative Justice Council: www.restorativejustice.org.uk

The Diana Award: www.diana-award.org.uk

Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk



Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk

Young Carers: www.youngcarers.net

The Restorative Justice Council: www.restorativejustice.org.uk/restorative-practice-schools

Changing Faces: www.changingfaces.org.uk

Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk

Anti-Bullying Alliance Cyberbullying and children and young people with SEN and disabilities:

www.cafamily.org.uk/media/750755/cyberbullying_and_send_-_module_final.pdf

Childnet: www.childnet.com

Internet Watch Foundation: www.iwf.org.uk

Think U Know: www.thinkuknow.co.uk

UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk

DfE 'Cyberbullying: advice for headteachers and school staff':

www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying

DfE 'Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying':

www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventingandtackling-bullying

Stop Hate: www.stophateuk.org

Educate against Hate: www.educateagainsthate.com

Show Racism the Red Card: www.srtrc.org/educational

Stonewall: www.stonewall.org.uk

Sexual harassment and sexual bullying Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAW):

www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk

www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/data/files/resources/71/EVAWCoalition-Schools-Guide.pdf

Disrespect No Body:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/disrespect-nobody-campaign-posters

www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying

12. Appendix A - 5 Point Bullying Plan



STOPPING BULLYING



SAFETEXT: 07756 477773

1. Speak Up and Tell Someone

- It's important to speak up if you're being bullied. Talk to a trusted adult, like a teacher, mentor, or a family member. You can also tell a friend who can help you get support.
- Remember, reporting bullying is not "snitching" – it's standing up for yourself or someone else who needs help.

2. Stay Safe and Walk Away

- If you feel threatened or unsafe, try to leave the situation as calmly as possible. Go to a safe space, like a classroom or the hub, where you can find an adult to help you.
- Don't engage with the person bullying you, even if it's tempting to respond. Your safety is the priority.

3. Keep a Record of What Happened

- Write down what happened, including dates, times, places, and the names of anyone involved. This can help when you report the bullying, as it gives a clear picture of what's been happening.
- Save any messages, screenshots, or social media posts if the bullying happens online. These can be useful as evidence when you talk to a teacher or another trusted adult.

4. Get Support

- You don't have to deal with bullying alone. Our safeguarding team is trained to support you.
- Be a friend to others who are being bullied – stand up with them, and let them know they're not alone. It helps everyone feel stronger together.

5. Use the School's Support System

- Remember that our school has a zero-tolerance policy for bullying. You can report incidents anonymously on Safe Text if you prefer, or ask for help from our safeguarding team.

Bullying is:

The repeated action from an individual or group of people towards one person.

It can include physical hitting or pushing, name calling, sending threatening or insulting messages

It is not:

One off incidents, friendship issues or arguments.