



COOMBE
WOOD
SCHOOL

Anti-Bullying Policy

Policy Area

Key Document

Author

Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead

Version

1.4

Last Updated

Summer 2nd half-term 2022

Adopted by the Local Governing Body (LGB)

Summer 2nd half-term 2022

Next Review

Summer 2nd half-term 2023

a folio education trust school

Contents:

Statement of intent

1. Legal framework
2. Statutory implications
3. Roles and responsibilities
4. What is bullying?
5. Types of bullying
6. Cyberbullying
7. Signs of bullying
8. How will the policy be put into practice?
9. What will the policy do?
10. Procedures in place for reporting incidents of all types of bullying
11. Guidelines for reporting incidents of bullying
12. Guidelines if you know someone is being bullied
13. Guidelines for bystanders
14. Support for victims of bullying
15. Criteria for success
16. Recording
17. Disciplinary penalties
18. Monitoring and evaluation

Statement of Intent

Bullying is not tolerated in any form at Coombe Wood School. This policy aims to create an environment where students are free from any kind of bullying by other members of the school community. It has been created to ensure that students feel a strong sense of wellbeing, security and happiness inside and outside the school, and also with the aim of opening up channels of communication between students, staff, parents/carers, other members of the community, and relevant support networks when necessary.

All students at Coombe Wood School have an equal right to participate in and enjoy their education, and to have the opportunity to fulfil their potential. Any action which hinders the educational and/or social development of any student will not be tolerated. This policy outlines how instances of bullying are dealt with, including the procedures to prevent occurrences of bullying.

These strategies, such as learning about tolerance and difference as part of the school's curriculum, aim to promote an inclusive, tolerant and supportive ethos at the school.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 outlines several legal obligations regarding the school's response to bullying. Under section 89, schools must have measures in place to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst students. These measures are part of the school's Praise and Behaviour Policy.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- Communications Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Education Act 2011
- DfE (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying'
- DfE (2018) 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
- DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2020) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Praise and Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Secondary School RSE and Health Education Policy
- Exclusion Policy

2. Statutory implications

The school understands that, under the Equality Act 2010, it has a responsibility to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

3. Roles and responsibilities

The **Local Governing Body** is responsible for:

- Evaluating and reviewing this policy to ensure that it is not discriminatory.
- Ensuring that the school adopts a tolerant and open-minded policy towards difference.
- Ensuring the school is inclusive.
- Analysing any bullying data to establish patterns and reviewing this policy in light of these.

The **Headteacher** and **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** are responsible for:

- Reviewing and amending this policy, accounting for new legislation and government guidance, and using staff experience of dealing with bullying incidents in previous years to improve procedures.
- Analysing the data in the bullying record at termly intervals to identify trends, so that appropriate measures to tackle them can be implemented.
- Arranging appropriate training for staff members.

Heads of Year are responsible for:

- Corresponding and meeting with parents where necessary.
- Providing a point of contact for students and parents when more serious bullying incidents occur.

Teachers are responsible for:

- Being alert to social dynamics in their class.
- Being available for students who wish to report bullying.
- Providing follow-up support after bullying incidents.
- Being alert to possible bullying situations, particularly exclusion from friendship groups, and informing the student's heads of year of such observations.

- Refraining from stereotyping when dealing with bullying.
- Understanding the composition of student groups, showing sensitivity to those who have been the victims of bullying.
- Reporting any instances of bullying once they have been approached by a student for support.

Parents are responsible for:

Looking out for signs of anxiety, such as unwillingness to go to school, or a pattern of headaches or stomach aches, which could be an excuse for not coming to school.

- Monitor the use of the internet by your child, especially the use of social networking sites. Find out how to block sites on your child's computer.
- If you think your child is being bullied, inform the school immediately and ask to speak to the Head of Year. If bullying persists, keep a record of the details.
- Do not encourage your child to hit back.

Coombe Wood School will endeavour to work alongside parents to ensure that the bullying stops and their child is safe, as well as providing support to the victim and perpetrator.

More information for parents/carers can be found at: Parentline Plus - Telephone: 0808 800 2222

Students are responsible for:

- Informing a member of staff if they witness bullying or are a victim of bullying.
- Not making counter-threats if they are victims of bullying.
- Walking away from dangerous situations and avoiding involving other students in incidents.
- Keeping evidence of cyberbullying and informing a member of staff should they fall victim to cyberbullying.

4. What is bullying?

For the purpose of this policy, "bullying" is defined as persistent behaviour by an individual or group with the intention of verbally, physically, or emotionally harming another person or group. Bullying is generally characterised by:

- **Repetition:** Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over a period of time.
- **Intent:** The perpetrator(s) means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental.
- **Targeting:** Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.
- **Power imbalance:** Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations.

Vulnerable students are more likely to be the targets of bullying due to the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves. Vulnerable students may include, but are not limited to:

- Students with SEND.
- Students who are adopted or looked after.
- Students suffering from a health problem.
- Students with caring responsibilities.

Students with certain characteristics are also more likely to be targets of bullying, including, but not limited to:

- Students who are LGBTQ+, or perceived to be LGBTQ+.
- Students from BAME backgrounds.
- Students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Many kinds of behaviour can be considered bullying, and bullying can be related to almost anything.

Teasing another student because of their appearance, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, home life, culture, disability, or SEND are some of the types of bullying that can occur.

Bullying is acted out through the following mediums:

- Verbally
- Physically
- Emotionally
- Online (cyberbullying)

5. Types of bullying

- **Racist bullying:** Bullying another person based on their ethnic background, religion or skin colour. Racist bullying is a criminal offence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Public Order Act 1986.
- **Homophobic/biphobic bullying:** Bullying another person because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.
- **Transphobic bullying:** Bullying based on another person's gender identity or gender presentation, or for not conforming to dominant gender roles.
- **Sexist bullying:** Bullying based on sexist attitudes expressed in a way to demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Sexist bullying may sometimes be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviours.
- **Sexual bullying:** Bullying behaviour that has a physical, psychological, verbal or non-verbal sexual dimension or dynamic that subordinates, humiliates or intimidates another person. This is commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes.
- **Prejudicial bullying:** Bullying based on prejudices directed towards specific characteristics, e.g. SEND or mental health issues.

- **Relational bullying:** Bullying that primarily constitutes of excluding, isolating and ostracising someone – usually through verbal and emotional bullying.
- **Socioeconomic bullying:** Bullying based on prejudices against the perceived social status of the victim, including, but not limited to, their economic status, their parents' occupations, their health or nutrition level, or the perceived "quality" of their clothing or belongings.

6. Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can include the following:

- Threatening, intimidating or upsetting text messages
- Threatening or embarrassing pictures and video clips sent via mobile phone cameras
- Disclosure of private sexual photographs or videos with the intent to cause distress
- Silent or abusive phone calls or using the victim's phone to harass others, to make them think the victim is responsible
- Threatening or bullying emails, possibly sent using a pseudonym or someone else's name
- Menacing or upsetting responses to someone in a chatroom
- Unpleasant messages sent via instant messaging
- Unpleasant or defamatory information posted to blogs, personal websites and social networking sites, e.g. Facebook

NB. The above list is not exhaustive, and cyberbullying may take other forms.

A cyberbullying incident might include features different to other forms of bullying, prompting a particular response. Significant differences may include the following:

- **Impact:** possible extensive scale and scope
- **Location:** the anytime and anywhere nature of cyberbullying
- **Anonymity:** the person being bullied might not know who the perpetrator is
- **Motivation:** the perpetrator might not realise that their actions are bullying
- **Evidence:** the subject of the bullying may have evidence of what has happened

If cyber bullying does occur:

- Do not respond.
- Secure and preserve any evidence and print off any computer evidence.
- If bullying occurs on a social networking site, inform the site and ask for this to be removed.
- Report this to a Head of Year or the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately - Mr Weir.

Staff, students and parents will be regularly educated about cyberbullying and the importance of staying safe online, in accordance with the school's E-Safety Policy. Teachers will discuss cyberbullying as part of the curriculum, and diversity, difference and respect for others will be promoted and celebrated through various lessons. Students will be educated about the importance of reporting instances of cyberbullying and will be fully informed of who they should report any concerns to.

The nature of any investigation will depend on the circumstances. It may include the following:

- Preserving evidence, for example, by saving or printing (e.g. phone messages, texts, emails and website pages)
- Efforts to identify the perpetrator, which may include looking at the media, systems and sites used; however, members of staff do not have the authority to search the contents of a phone unless the device has been seized in a lawful 'without consent' search and is prohibited by the school rules, or is suspected of being, or likely to be, used to commit an offence or cause personal injury or damage to property
- Identifying and questioning witnesses
- Contacting the CEOP centre if images might be illegal or raise child protection issues
- Requesting that a student reveals a message or other phone content or confiscating a phone
- Legal action, e.g. where private sexual videos or images of an individual under 16-years-old are disclosed with the intent to cause distress

7. Signs of bullying

Staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a student is a victim of bullying:

- Being frightened to travel to or from school
- Unwillingness to attend school
- Repeated or persistent absence from school
- Becoming anxious or lacking confidence
- Saying that they feel ill repeatedly
- Decreased involvement in school work
- Leaving school with torn clothes or damaged possessions
- Missing possessions
- Missing dinner money
- Asking for extra money or stealing
- Cuts or bruises
- Lack of appetite
- Unwillingness to use the internet or mobile devices
- Becoming agitated when receiving calls or text messages
- Lack of eye contact
- Becoming short tempered

- Change in behaviour and attitude at home

Although the signs outlined above may not be due to bullying, they may be due to deeper social, emotional or mental health issues, so are still worth investigating. Students who display a significant number of these signs will be approached by a member of the pastoral team to determine the underlying issues causing this behaviour.

Staff will be aware of the potential factors that may indicate a student is likely to exhibit bullying behaviours, including, but not limited to, the following:

- They have experienced mental health problems, which have led to them becoming more easily aggravated
- They have been the victim of abuse
- Their academic performance has started to fall and they are showing signs of stress

If staff become aware of any factors that could lead to bullying behaviours, they will notify the student's form tutor, who will investigate the matter and monitor the situation.

8. How will the policy be put into practice?

- Positive attitudes towards each other will be promoted through the PSHE programme, assemblies, tutor time, and all other aspects of school life. Students will be informed of the school's procedures through the PSHE programme, tutor time and assemblies. They will be encouraged to report incidents of bullying to their tutor, Head of Year, DSL or any member of the teaching or non-teaching staff.
- All reported or investigated instances of bullying will be investigated and dealt with sensitively by the appropriate member of staff.
- All types of bullying will be discussed as part of the Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and health education curriculum, in line with the Secondary School RSE and Health Education Policy. Staff will be expected to actively promote and implement a whole school ethos that is opposed to bullying in all forms.
- Staff will encourage student cooperation and the development of interpersonal skills using group and pair work. Diversity, difference and respect for others will be promoted and celebrated through various lessons.
- Seating plans will be organised and altered in a way that considers the dynamics of social groups.
- Opportunities to extend friendship groups and interactive skills will be provided through participation in special events, e.g. house competitions, drama productions, sporting activities and cultural groups.
- All members of the school will be made aware of this policy and their responsibilities in relation to it. All staff members will receive training on identifying and dealing with the different types of bullying.
- A safe place, supervised by a teacher, will be available for students as needed.

- Form tutors will also offer an 'open door' policy allowing students to discuss any bullying, whether they are victims or have witnessed an incident.
- Before a new student joins the school, the head of year will plan a strategy to support effective transition – this will include giving the student a buddy to help integrate them into the school.
- The school will be alert to, and address, any mental health and wellbeing issues amongst students, as these can be a cause of bullying behaviour.
- The school will be alert to instances of the sharing of indecent imagery of students amongst the school cohort, and will evaluate whether the instance is part of normal sexual development or whether it presents a safeguarding concern; the latter instances will be managed in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- The school will ensure potential perpetrators are given support as required, so their educational, emotional and social development isn't negatively influenced by outside factors, e.g. mental health issues.

9. What will this policy do?

Promote positive attitudes towards all members of the school community.

- Encourage an atmosphere and ethos where bullying is prevented.
- Ensure that all staff, students and parents/carers are all aware of what constitutes bullying.
- Encourage students to report incidents of bullying, by educating them on why it is wrong and who to tell.
- Ensure that bullying incidents are taken seriously, followed up, and dealt with appropriately.
- Encourage everyone to actively challenge bullying whenever and wherever it occurs.
- Ensure that all students are aware that no bullying is tolerated.

10. Procedures in place for reporting incidents of all types of bullying

- The pastoral staff will investigate any complaint received.
- All those involved in the incident will be interviewed separately, and written statements obtained using the student statement form, and kept in student files.
- If a complaint is upheld, the parents/carers of the offending student will be informed of any sanctions imposed, and may be asked to come into school to discuss this further.
- Sanctions may be enforced as discussed by the Head of Year and Senior Pastoral Team.
- A meeting (or meetings, if required) will take place between the bully and victim for a process of reconciliation, if appropriate.
- The situation from this point onwards will be closely monitored.

11. Guidelines for reporting incidents of bullying

- If you are being bullied, try to stay calm and ask the bully politely and assertively to stop acting in the way that is upsetting you.
- Get away from the situation as quickly as possible, and tell an adult what has happened straight away.
- If you are concerned about telling a teacher or an adult on your own, ask a friend to go with you. Speak to a member of staff.
- If you experience bullying by mobile phone, text message or email, do not delete it, keep it as evidence.
- Do not try to take matters into your own hands using bribery or violence.

More information can also be sought from:

Childline Telephone: 0800 1111 (free phone)

12. Guidelines if you know someone is being bullied

- Let a teacher or other adult know what is happening either in person or via our anonymous “I want to talk” on the CWS website.
- Try to be a friend to the person being bullied.
- **Refuse** to join in with the bullying.
- **Do not** use violence or be disrespectful in an attempt to stand up for someone.

13. Guidelines for bystanders

The school's culture and ethos is to respect each individual and to report any knowledge of bullying to a member of staff. Failure to comply with this can result in you becoming subject to the same punishments as the bully.

14. Support for victims of bullying

Victims will always be taken seriously, reassured, supported and kept safe. Victims will never be made to feel like they are causing a problem or made to feel ashamed.

- Discussing the experience with a member of staff.
- Restoring self- confidence and self-esteem.
- Mediated discussions to take place with the bully, to promote reconciliation but only with the victim's consent.
- If a friend of a victim makes a report or a member of staff overhears a conversation, staff will act – they will never assume that someone else will deal with it. The basic principles remain the same as when a victim reports an incident; however, staff will consider why the victim has not chosen to make a report themselves and the discussion will be handled sensitively and with the help of children's social care services (CSCS) where necessary.

- Staff will report all allegations of abuse against students to the DSL. If staff are in any doubt over how to handle an incident or report, they will speak to the DSL.
- If a report involves a student with SEND, the DSL will work with the SENCO to decide what course of action is necessary, with the best interests of the student in mind at all times.

15. Criteria for success

- Students feel safe and happy, and so succeed at school. This will be measured through our student feedback surveys.
- Students and parents/carers have confidence in the school's procedures for dealing with bullying. This will be measured through our student feedback surveys and parental forums.

16. Recording

The school will only engage with staff and agencies required to support the victim and/or be involved in any investigation. If a victim asks the school not to tell anyone about the disclosure, the school will not make this promise. Even without the victim's consent, the information may still be lawfully shared if it is in the public interest and protects children from harm.

The DSL will consider the following when making confidentiality decisions:

- Parents will be informed unless it will place the victim at greater risk
- If a student is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger or has been harmed, a referral will be made to CSCS
- Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are crimes – reports containing any such crimes will be passed to the police

More information regarding the school's stance on preventing peer-on-peer sexual abuse is available in our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

- All those involved in the incident, including the member of staff to whom the bullying was disclosed, will record the events in writing, using the student statement form.
- All bullying incidents are logged on the school's bullying log on SIMS.
- The parents/carers of students involved will be provided with details of the incident.

17. Disciplinary penalties

At Coombe Wood School disciplinary penalties have 3 main purposes:

- To impress on the perpetrator(s) that what they have done is unacceptable, and to hold them accountable for their behaviour.
- To deter (prevent the occurrence of) the perpetrator from repeating any bullying.
- To deter other students and send a clear message that this behaviour is unacceptable.

18. Monitoring and evaluation

- All accounts of bullying will be kept on SIMS our online data system / in the files of all those students involved. This includes those who may have not been directly involved in the events but failed to report the incidents or encouraged such anti-social behaviour.
- Incidents of bullying will be monitored by the Pastoral Team and the Local Governing Body who will look at trends in year groups, reasons for bullying, types of bullying etc.