

WHITGIFT SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Colleagues responsible for this policy:

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Policy statement:

At Whitgift School, we are committed to fostering a culture rooted in mutual respect, tolerance, self-esteem, and positive self-confidence, as outlined in our core aims. These values are central to our approach to student welfare, safeguarding, and behaviour, and are vital to building a thriving, inclusive school community. We believe every student has the right to feel safe, valued, supported, and welcomed at all times. We actively promote an environment where kindness, empathy, integrity, and other positive values are consistently modelled and celebrated.

In full alignment with the Department for Education, Whitgift School recognises that bullying of any kind can have a deeply damaging impact on a student's welfare – not only at the time of the incident, but also before and long after it occurs. The effects may be felt throughout childhood and can persist into adulthood, influencing mental health, self-perception, and overall wellbeing. Bullying can act as a barrier to attendance, participation, learning, and a sense of belonging, and may severely undermine a student's confidence and emotional resilience.

As such, bullying is wholly unacceptable and will not be tolerated under any circumstances. It directly contradicts the values we seek to instill and threatens the integrity of our school community. The School fully endorses the principles of the Equality Act 2010, the promotion of Fundamental British Values, and the guidance outlined in the Department for Education's Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) and Preventing and Tackling Bullying (2017) publications. These frameworks inform our commitment to the proactive prevention of bullying in all its forms.

All allegations of bullying are treated with the utmost seriousness. Our response is robust, compassionate, and proportionate, ensuring that all students involved are supported and that the school environment remains safe, respectful, and conducive to personal growth.

Policy integration:

Bullying and anti-bullying practices must be understood in conjunction with the School's broader policies, including, but not limited to:

- The School Rules and Regulations
- Behaviour, Discipline and Exclusions Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural Development Policy
- Online Safety Policy

Together, these documents outline the standards of conduct expected of all members of the school community and the procedures for addressing unacceptable behaviour.

Policy availability:

This policy is made available to all staff, students, and parents via the School website and forms part of the wider School Rules and Regulations and Behaviour, Discipline and Exclusions policy.

Policy development:

This policy has also been developed with due regard to, but is not limited to:

- Department for Education's '[Preventing and Tackling Bullying](#)' (2017) guidance.
- The Equality Act (2010)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
- Education and Inspections Act (2006)
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations (2014)
- Childnet's 'Cyberbullying: Understand, Prevent and Respond' Guidance for Schools
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges (2021)
- Harassment Act (1997)
- Malicious Communications Act (1988)
- Children Act (1989)

Definition of bullying:

At Whitgift School, bullying is defined as the deliberate and repeated behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to hurt, intimidate, humiliate, or distress another person – either physically or emotionally. Such behaviour may be motivated by prejudice, discrimination, or a desire to assert power or control. Bullying is not limited to completed acts; it may also include attempted or interrupted behaviours that cause harm or fear.

Bullying can manifest in a range of attitudes and actions, including but not limited to:

- Physical: hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, blocking movement, or aggressive, insulting or intimidating gestures, or damaging personal property
- Verbal: name-calling, mocking, threatening language, or offensive, aggressive or intimidating language or remarks
- Emotional/Psychological: deliberate exclusion, rejection, isolation, manipulation, extortion, coercion, or gaslighting
- Sexual: inappropriate comments, gestures, innuendo, or unwanted physical contact

Cyberbullying: harassment, intimidation, or abuse via digital platforms such as social media, messaging apps, gaming platforms, and email.

Bullying may be motivated by actual, perceived, or by association differences and can target

others based on, but not limited to, the following protected or vulnerable characteristics:

- Age
- Disability or learning need (including Special Educational Needs and English as an Additional Language)
- Gender identity
- Race, ethnicity, or nationality
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Home circumstances, such as being adopted, in care, having caring responsibilities, or experiencing family breakdown

In addition to overt bullying, low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can have a significant impact on individuals. If left unchallenged, such behaviour may discourage students from reporting more serious incidents and contribute to a culture of silence. The School recognises that early intervention is essential to setting clear expectations about acceptable behaviour and preventing escalation.

This definition recognises that bullying can occur in various contexts including child-on-child, adult-on-child, and child-on-adult interactions. It may be overt and visible or covert and subtle, and it can take place in person or online, within or beyond the physical or digital school environment or school hours. Regardless of the context, we regard bullying as a serious offence with the potential to cause significant harm.

Aims:

Whitgift School's approach to anti-bullying is guided by the following aims:

- To establish and maintain clear preventative measures that promote a respectful school culture and define, monitor, and uphold the interpersonal standards expected of all members of our school community
- To respond to incidents of bullying in a reasonable, proportionate, and consistent manner
- To safeguard individuals experiencing bullying and provide support for them
- To offer support and guidance to the perpetrator(s), which will most likely include disciplinary sanctions, with the goal of helping them understand the impact of their behaviour and discontinue it.

Anti-bullying approach:

Our approach to anti-bullying is proactive, preventative, and embedded within the culture and climate of the school. It does not begin only when a child is bullied, but is reflected in the everyday interactions, expectations, and values upheld by every member of our community.

School rules and regulations:

We proudly set high standards of behaviour for all students. Staff across all areas –pastoral, academic, co-curricular, and support – invest time in ensuring students understand what is expected of them and why. When students make errors in judgement in their behaviour, we respond with a consistent focus on reconciliation and re-education, regardless of age, to help them reflect, learn, reintegrate and avoid repeating such actions.

Education:

We educate students of all ages about the nature and impact of bullying through the curriculum, whole-school assembly programme, the pastoral support structure and our extensive co-curricular programme.

Whitgift is particularly known for its co-curricular provision, where students learn to collaborate across year groups, skill levels, and with other school settings. These experiences foster empathy, teamwork, and respect.

We explicitly teach that prejudice-based language, regardless of intent or context, is unacceptable and will be addressed accordingly. We actively challenge bystander culture, ensuring all students understand their shared responsibility to prevent, recognise, challenge, and report known or suspected instances of bullying.

Staff training:

Staff are trained to recognise the early signs of bullying, respond appropriately and sensitively, and understand the possible vulnerability factors associated with bullying.

Pastoral and behavioural updates are regularly shared by Directors of Section, Heads of Year, and their teams, including through the weekly Pastoral Bulletin. Staff are kept informed of emerging trends, including in digital technology, and proactive steps are taken to ensure any emerging concerns are addressed, for example, in the case of digital technology through updates to our 'Acceptable Use' policies.

Culture of open dialogue:

We encourage students to speak out, support one another, and uphold the values of respect and responsibility. We routinely remind students that every member of staff, regardless of role, is part of the support network available to them. This helps to inculcate a culture that every student in our community has access to a trusted adult. Students are also regularly informed of the various ways they can report concerns, including through anonymous reporting tools, fostering a culture of openness and trust.

Response:

All incidents of bullying are investigated thoroughly and sensitively. Victims are supported through tailored pastoral care and, where appropriate, support via external services. Perpetrators are held accountable and supported to reflect and change their behaviour. This includes exploring any underlying motivations behind the bullying. In the case of both roles, support is not isolated but part of sequence of monitored postvention. The nature and level of support will depend on the individual circumstances and the level of need. This may range from a quiet, informal conversation with a trusted teacher, to more structured interventions such as pastoral team involvement, formal counselling, or engagement with parents. Where appropriate, referrals may be made to external agencies including local authority children's services, and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Parent engagement:

We believe in the power of a positive school-parent partnership. As such, we actively involve parents and encourage them to reinforce the broader values of the School, particularly respectful behaviour, in support of their child's personal development. In cases of bullying, we ensure that parents understand that bullying is not tolerated and they are made aware of procedures to

follow if they suspect any form of bullying. We instill a culture of confidence amongst parents that the school will take all concerns seriously and resolve them effectively.

Achievement of aims

The School achieves its approach to anti-bullying through a whole-school model that priorities education, communication, and engagement. This approach ensures that all members of the school community – students, staff, and parents – are actively involved in promoting a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment. Key strategies include:

- Assembly talks and themed presentations or interactive workshops
- Promoting positive relationships among students and between students and staff
- Structured discussions in tutor groups, Ideatum (PSHE) lessons, Year Group Committee meetings, Student Council, the Student Culture & Diversity Board, and student leadership roles such as the School Captain and Junior/Senior Prefect Teams
- Regular meetings between senior students and members of staff to foster dialogue and shared responsibility
- Maintaining strong lines of communication within the School and with parents and carers to ensure concerns are raised and addressed promptly
- Staff discussions at relevant forums
- Celebrating success, positive behaviour alongside the diversity of our school community and society more broadly
- Engaging external organisations or resources for specialist support where a specific need is identified
- Collaborating with the wider community, including The Police and children's services, where bullying is serious or persistent and may constitute a criminal offence

Reporting and support:

Students are encouraged to report any concerns about bullying to any member of staff. Their most immediate route is typically to speak to their tutor, Head of Year or another member of the Year Group Team. Additional points of contact include: the Director of Safeguarding/Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL), the Deputy Head (Pastoral), the Assistant Head (Pastoral and Boarding), the Directors of Section, the School Counsellors, the Medical Centre staff and the Founder's House staff.

Students may also use the Senso 'Report Concern' button (accessible via their school devices) to send an anonymous message to the Director of Safeguarding/DSL and Deputy Head (Pastoral).

Preventative measures:

Building students' self-esteem and self-confidence is a key preventative measure. Assemblies, form periods, and Ideatum lessons also address the issues of bullying, by promoting kindness and resilience. This includes a counteraction of the 'bystander effect' and encouragement of assertive intervention. These sessions also explore the differences between people, the importance of avoiding discriminatory language, promotion of inclusive language, and the rejection of discriminatory behaviour.

The School aims to create an inclusive and safe environment where students can openly discuss the causes and impact of bullying without fear of further bullying, discrimination, or victimisation. Prompt and appropriate action is taken to support both the victim(s) and the perpetrator(s).

Prefects and peer mentors are trained and deployed to support the implementation of this policy and help foster a whole-school anti-bullying ethos.

Sanctions and monitoring:

Where appropriate, strong sanctions will be applied. These may include Sectional Detentions, Headmaster's Detention, and Suspensions. Additional consequences may be imposed depending on the severity of the circumstances. These may include a loss of privileges, such as access to unstructured free time during break or lunch, participation in specific trips or enrichment activities, or, in the case of the Sixth Form, the ability to leave the school site during designated times.

All incidents of bullying are reported to the Deputy Head (Pastoral), who will inform the Senior Deputy. A record of each incident is maintained on CPOMS. In cases of persistent bullying, the Headmaster will review the student's membership of the School community, and continued education at Whitgift may not be possible.

Governors, as part of the Education & Welfare Subcommittee, are informed of bullying trends, patterns, and the impact of interventions through termly reports and pastoral updates provided by the Deputy Head Pastoral, Assistant Head (Pastoral & Boarding), and the Director of Safeguarding/DSL.

Role of parents and guardians:

The partnership of parents and carers is essential in both the prevention of bullying and the resolution of incidents when they occur.

The parents and guardians of both victim(s) and perpetrator(s) will be actively involved in the strategies to resolve specific situations. They are encouraged to report any concerns to their child's tutor or Head of Year, in the first instance, and beyond that, if appropriate, to the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and, in the case of boarders, the Senior Housemaster and Assistant Head (Pastoral and Boarding).

Parents of students involved in bullying incidents may be invited into School to discuss the matter in person.

Cyber-bullying:

The use of technology such as mobile telephones, tablets, laptops, games consoles, and the Internet to intimidate others is an ongoing concern. Technology has provided a new medium for bullying, which can occur both in and outside of school and can happen at any time, often with a wider audience and greater reach due to the ease of sharing content.

The School recognises the serious impact of cyberbullying, including bullying via social media, messaging apps, email, and phone calls. Such behaviour is highly intrusive and can be deeply harmful. The School enforces strict policies regarding the use of mobile telephones and internet access, and closely monitors all e-communications and activity on the School network or devices. Further details of these matters, including the School's approach to filtering and monitoring of its IT network, are outlined in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the Online Safety Policy.

The School reserves the right to view electronic material held or accessed by any student in School, including their e-mail account and their mobile telephone. Where any form of cyber-bullying affects another student in the School or may bring the School into disrepute, the School

reserves the right to be involved whether the electronic material was produced within the School or outside. Students must be aware that some forms and levels of cyber-bullying are illegal and the School will inform the police when necessary.

Reporting mechanisms:

Reporting bullying must be seen by students as important and the systems for this are straightforward. Staff must be approachable and students are regularly reminded of channels of communication during assemblies and form periods. Students may report bullying via the Senso 'Report Concern' button on all School devices or through another student. It may be that bullying is not reported by the person involved but seen by another student or a member of staff. Staff must report all incidents of bullying, either to the appropriate Head of Year or Director of Section, the Assistant Head (Pastoral and Boarding), the Deputy Head (Pastoral), the Director of Safeguarding/Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Senior Deputy.

Bullying incidents and the action taken will be recorded. Extremely serious cases, where there is a risk of serious harm, should be reported immediately to the Director of Safeguarding / Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will report promptly to the Croydon Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), whose contact details can be found at the beginning of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Students should be reminded that their reports of bullying will be listened to and that incidents will be acted on appropriately and sensitively. Students are also encouraged to raise any concerns with cyber-bullying or other bullying which they are experiencing outside of School and the School will act and discipline students as needed.

Record-keeping:

Aligned with the School's procedures for managing pastoral concerns of all types, all records relating to bullying incidents are securely maintained within CPOMS. These records, compiled by Heads of Year and their teams, include:

- Summary details of reported incidents
- Relevant contextual information
- A summary of investigative steps taken
- Details of actions, resolutions, and monitoring or postvention steps taken

Where sanctions are issued, these are recorded in the student's profile on iSAMS, forming part of their wider school record. This integrated approach enables effective postvention and ongoing monitoring following an incident. Due to the personalised and analytical capabilities of CPOMS, the School is able to monitor and identify potential patterns and trends across:

- Individual students
- Specific groups or cohorts
- Sections of the School
- The School community more broadly

This system functions as the School's centralised bullying log, which is regularly monitored by the Deputy Head (Pastoral), Assistant Head (Pastoral and Boarding), Deputy DSL, and DSL. This record-keeping system is designed to:

- Provide the pastoral team with the fullest possible picture of each situation
- Enable the identification and addressing of patterns and trends

- Link and compare incidents involving students across different year groups
- Maintain a comprehensive historical record

Heads of Year and their teams are alert to patterns of behaviour and are well placed to advise tutors on potential times, locations, or contexts where bullying may occur. Additionally, CPOMS and iSAMS records support the handover process at the end of each academic year, when outgoing Heads of Year meet with their successors to pass on key information about students in their cohort. This ensures continuity of care and supports proactive pastoral planning.

Boarding context – Founder’s House:

As stated in the School’s Boarding Principles, students within the Boarding community should feel safe and secure, free from the threat of all forms of bullying, and supported in an environment where they can be happy, healthy and fulfilled.

Whitgift School recognises the significant additional pastoral and safeguarding responsibilities it holds for students residing in Founder’s House, the School’s Boarding House. These responsibilities are taken very seriously.

The Senior Housemaster (Boarding), supported by a team of Deputies and Tutors, and under the direction of the Assistant Head (Pastoral & Boarding), plays a central role in this provision. This team oversees the induction of boarders (student residents in Founder’s House) in all pastoral matters and provides the first point of contact - for students, their Guardians, and parents – for all concerns and immediate needs.

In relation to this Anti-Bullying Policy, the following specific provisions apply within the boarding context:

- There are no ‘initiation ceremonies’ or similar practices intended to cause pain, anxiety, humiliation, or distress of any type.
- Students who experience bullying are actively supported, and those who may engage in bullying behaviour are provided with appropriate support, guidance, and intervention.

The Senior Housemaster (Boarding) maintains extensive further documentation on matters relating to pastoral care within the Boarding House, shared with all members of the Boarding House Team. This ensures staff are alert to the possibility and potential signs of bullying, and other pastoral concerns, and are consistent in their approach. Specific contacts and support structures available to boarders are detailed in the Boarders’ Handbook. Where members of the Boarding House Team address bullying concerns, the Senior Housemaster (Boarding) and their deputy ensure that pastoral leaders in the day school are updated as appropriate. CPOMS is fundamental in this process, ensuring consistent record-keeping.

The School is committed to ensuring that the boarding environment reflects the same high standards of care, respect, and safety as the wider school community, with tailored support to meet the unique needs of residential students.

Summary of staff responsibilities:

All staff share responsibility for promoting a safe and respectful school environment free from bullying. Key roles include:

- All Staff: Remain vigilant, model respectful behaviour, and report concerns promptly via the appropriate channels.
- Heads of Year, their Year Group Teams and Tutors: Act as the first point of contact for

students and parents, monitor student wellbeing and respond to concerns sensitively.

- Directors of Section: Oversee pastoral provision and coordinate responses across year groups.
- Deputy Head (Pastoral) and Assistant Head (Pastoral & Boarding): Lead on policy implementation and strategic oversight of pastoral and behavioural matters.
- Director of Safeguarding/DSL and Deputy DSL: Manage safeguarding concerns and liaise with external agencies.
- Boarding Staff: Provide continuous and connected pastoral care for residential students and ensure consistency between day and boarding provision.

Policy review and evaluation:

This policy is reviewed annually by the Deputy Head (Pastoral) in collaboration with the Assistant Head (Pastoral & Boarding), the Designated Safeguarding Lead, and other relevant staff. The review process considers feedback from students, staff, and parents, as well as data from CPOMS and iSAMS. Updates are made to ensure continued alignment with statutory guidance, best practice, and the evolving needs of the school community.

Useful contacts:

Croydon Drop-In (CDI)
Counselling and mental health support for young people
020 8680 0404
www.croydondropin.org.uk

Childline
Free, confidential support for children and young people
0800 1111
www.childline.org.uk

Samaritans
24/7 emotional support for anyone in distress
116 123
www.samaritans.org

NSPCC
Child protection and safeguarding advice
0808 800 5000
www.nspcc.org.uk

SupportLine
Online and phone Emotional Support
01708765200
www.supportline.org.uk

National Bullying Helpline
Online and phone support
0300 323 0169
www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk

Kidscape
Online support
www.kidscape.org.uk

Anti-Bullying Alliance
Online support
www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

BulliesOut
Online support
www.bulliesout.com

NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline
Professionals concerned about safeguarding practices
0800 028 0285
help@nspcc.org.uk

Speak Up
Independent reporting service for safeguarding concerns
08000 724 725

Dame Rachel de Souza, Children's Commissioner for England
0207 783 8330 (General enquiries)
0800 528 0731 (Help At Hand - for children in care or with social workers)
www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

YoungMinds
Mental health support and resources for young people and parents
www.youngminds.org.uk

Kooth
Free online counselling and emotional wellbeing support
www.kooth.com

The Mix
Support for under-25s on mental health
www.themix.org.uk

Further sources of information can be found in the Department for Education's '[Preventing and Tackling Bullying](#)' (2017) guidance.