Aysgarth School

Anti Bullying Strategy Including Cyberbullying

(This policy should be read in conjunction with the 'Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy')

Reviewed September 2026
To be reviewed September 2027
Responsible Member of Staff: Paul Barlow
Governor i/c Pastoral Care: Claire Cadogan/Flora McLean

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

All ISI Schools

Regulation 3 'welfare, health and safety of pupils': The school shall ensure that there is a written policy to promote good behaviour amongst pupils. The school will ensure that bullying is prevented in so far as reasonably practicable, by the implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy. This policy also sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupils' misbehaviour, and is drawn up and implemented effectively. The school shall also ensure that regard is had to the DfE guidance *Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for School Leaders, Staff and Governing Bodies (July 2017)*
Boarding schools: as for day schools, *and*: NMS 15: Promoting Positive Behaviour and Relationships

This policy also relates to the following policies

- Provision of Pastoral Care
- Child on Child Abuse Policy
- RE/RSE and PSHE Policy
- Discipline Policy
- Online Policy

A Legal Requirement, an ISI Reporting Standard and
OFSTED Standards for EYFS providers

References:

A. "Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for School Leaders, Staff and Governing Bodies" DfE guidance (July 2017) (www.education.gov.uk)
B. ISI Handbook for the Inspection of Schools: Commentary on the Regulatory Requirements, September 2022 (www.isi.net/)
C. The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (Effective September 2021) (www.ofsted.gov.uk)
D. "Bullying": An ISC Child Health and Wellbeing Working Party Guidance Update Five
E. "Where You are NOT Alone" https://www.bullying.co.uk/
F. "Cyberbullying"- a briefing note on the ISBA website by Farrer & Co
G. "What is Cyberbullying? - a definition www.cyberbullying.org
H. "Child Protection and New Technologies" by Childnet International
http://www.childnet-int.org/

Bullying Statement

Essentially, bullying is repeatedly making another person's life unpleasant or unhappy over time.

BULLYING IS THE WILFUL, CONSCIOUS DESIRE TO HURT, THREATEN, FRIGHTEN OR UPSET SOMEONE ELSE.

All Members of Aysgarth School have the right to enjoy their lives free of bullying and harassment and are expected to treat others as they hope to be treated themselves in an atmosphere of mutual respect. They are expected to do all they can to show disapproval of bullying.

An individual who feels bullied or intimidated has the right to expect any senior member of the School – pupil, dorm captain, prefect or member of staff – to listen and to act promptly and sensitively to deal with the problem.

Bullying will always be treated seriously, and the school believes that to do nothing is to condone the bullying.

Aims and Objectives

This policy applies to pupils in the Prep and Pre-Prep, including EYFS. The aims and objectives of this policy are to provide guidance to staff on how to prevent bullying, how to recognise it and what to do in the event that it occurs, so that it is easy to report bullying, including cyber-bullying and bullying outside school. It is unusual to find a group of people where there is not the potential for bullying to occur, but the likelihood of it occurring can be significantly reduced by encouraging the right sort of culture in the School. Bullying can result in lasting damage to the victims, sometimes causing psychological damage and even suicide, and therefore must be taken very seriously. All pupils complete annual 'Living Together' surveys which specifically include questions directly related to bullying, ensuring that the impact of bullying on individual children is being monitored to ensure that a holistic picture is maintained between different aspects of school provision such as teaching, boarding and health care.

Records of Bullying

All incidents of bullying or perceived bullying are recorded by all staff on a bullying record sheet and are filed in the bullying folder kept by the Senior Deputy Head. This folder allows the school to monitor and have a clear picture of bullying incidents throughout the school. An ongoing review sheet is also kept to help record patterns or systems of bullying.

A bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

Bullying – what is it?

Essentially, bullying is repeatedly making another person's or group of persons' lives unpleasant or unhappy over time. The perpetrator may see it as 'just a game' and may not be aware that what they are doing constitutes bullying. It can take many forms:

- racial
- religious
- cultural
- sexual/sexist
- homophobic or gender orientation
- special educational needs and disability
- child on child abuse
- because a child is adopted or is a carer
- bullying based on physical difference (such as body shape).

Different means of bullying include

- physical
- sexual (including sexual violence, assault by penetration and sexual assault, sexual harassment, upskirting)
- verbal (spoken and written, via any means)
- emotional bullying (including exclusion, use of silence, the formation of cliques, spreading rumours)
- cyber-bullying (including via texting, sexting, social networking sites, mobile phones, digital media, email, camera-enabled devices, image sharing sites such as YouTube or Flicker).
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals
- Serious violence
- 'Banter', defined as 'the playful and friendly exchange of teasing remarks' is seen as a form of bonding and humour.

Bullying, on the other hand, is defined as using 'superior strength or influence to intimidate (someone)' and deemed to be hurtful or offensive.

There's a fine line between the two, and it is important for Staff to know how to determine which is which. Staff at Aysgarth are aware that the term 'banter' can sometimes mask actions of bullying. All incidents of unkindness or harm are treated with due diligence and recorded in the bullying folder. 'Banter' will not be used as an excuse for actions of bullying.

It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation.

Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time and can involve everyone - pupils, other young people, staff and parents. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidatory.

Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.

BULLYING IS THE WILFUL, CONSCIOUS DESIRE TO HURT, THREATEN,
FRIGHTEN OR UPSET SOMEONE ELSE.

To do this, the bully usually has to have some sort of power over the victim, a power not always easily recognisable. Tackling bullying is a key issue in making a school a happy place for everyone.

Some forms of bullying are illegal and should be reported to the police and become a Child Protection Issue. These include:

- violence or assault
- theft
- repeated harassment or intimidation, eg name calling, threats and abusive phone calls, emails or text messages
- hate crimes

For further information on the threshold of reporting a bully to outside agencies, please refer to https://www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school/reporting-bullying and the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) has produced non-statutory guidance

(https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/resource/npcc-child-centred-policing/) for when a pupil has potentially committed a crime at school.

CYBERBULLYING – DEFINITION

Mr Bill Belsey, the creator of the website: www.cyberbullying.org, defined this unpleasant and particularly intrusive phenomenon in the following terms:

"Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others."

Cyberbullying can involve Social Networking Sites, like Bebo, Facebook and Myspace, emails and mobile phones used for SMS messages and as cameras.

Countering Cyberbullying

There is more guidance and information on cyberbullying and countering cyberbullying in the Aysgarth School 'Technology Policy'

The School asks all pupils to adhere to its code of conduct for the safe use of the Internet, and pupils sign this code to indicate that they have read and understood its terms.

Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our IT Department monitors pupils' use.

The School may impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of digital technology, including the Internet.

The School issues all pupils with their own personal school email address and offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords and other personal details safe, through ICT lessons.

All pupils in ICT are taught about the Aysgarth Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and must sign an agreement to meet the school's criteria. A copy of this can be found in the Parents' Handbook.

The School offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyber-bullying through the PSHE programme which covers blocking, removing contacts from 'friends' lists and sharing personal data.

Further Guidance:

- All staff must only use school cameras to take photographs of pupils
- Pupils are required to hand in mobile phones.
- No pupil is allowed to take photographs or record images of other pupils or staff on their personal devices.
- All computers, laptops and Chromebooks must only use the school internet access on the school premises.
- The school provides regular INSET and training for staff, pupils and parents on Internet safety and Cyberbullying.

Bullying and Safeguarding/Child Protection

- Children with special educational needs (SEND) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. It is the role of SEND to make all staff aware of such educational needs and disabilities that might increase the risk of safeguarding issues.
- All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues. Staff should be aware that behaviours linked to the likes of drug taking, alcohol abuse, truanting and sexting put children in danger.
- Staff should recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers.
- All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child on child abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to, bullying (including cyberbullying), sexual violence, sexual harassment and sexting. All staff should be clear as to the school's policy and procedures with regard to child on child abuse. Additional information regarding child on child abuse is in Annex A and B of KCSIE 2026.
- For further information, please see Aysgarth School Policy on 'Child on Child Abuse'.

Recognising Bullies

There is no unique collection of characteristics that add up to a bully. Bullies can be pupils who are:

- academically achieving less
- achieving as well as – if not better than – their peers
- unpopular or insecure
- quite secure and happy

Bullies can also be victims. Bullies tend to have assertive, aggressive attitudes over which they exercise little control. Bullies tend to lack empathy; they cannot imagine what the victims feel. Bullies tend to lack guilt; they rationalise that the victims somehow 'deserves' the bullying treatment. It is difficult to get to the real facts about who bullies. They do not come in standard size. They are not recognisable stereotypes. If teachers rely on the stereotype definition, they may not recognise other bullying

Recognising the Victims

What we have so far is a bully who will not be stereotyped and behaviour categorised as bullying through the context and intent. Is the victim any more identifiable? A stereotype exists here, too, of a weak, shy, small child – someone anxious, uncertain and 'different'.

Aysgarth School recognises that specific groups of pupils are particularly vulnerable to bullying, victims may be pupils who:

- are new to the class, dormitory or school;
- are different in appearance, speech or background from others;
- suffer from low esteem (but it is not clear whether this is a cause or effect of bullying);
- demonstrate 'entertaining' reactions when bullied, e.g. tantrums, loss of control, are more nervous or anxious.
- boarders who are unable to have time away from the bully
- children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- young carers,
- Black and Minority Ethnic (BME),
- those who are, or thought to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersexual, asexual or pansexual (LGBTQ+).

All of these possibilities are simply possibilities, not predictions of victimisation. The victim may be the child who is in the wrong place at the wrong time and who

reacts wrongly. VULNERABILITY IS NOT ALWAYS VISIBLE TO ADULTS. THE VICTIM MAY LOOK LIKE ANY OTHER CHILD. A quiet, self-contained pupil may be suffering in silence, invisible to those who could help unless encouraged by the school policy to speak out. Staff have to be alert to the behaviour of 'ordinary' pupils as well as supporting those pupils evidently different from their peers.

Signs a Child is Being Bullied

Look for changes in the child. However, be aware that not all children who are bullied exhibit warning signs.

Some signs that may point to a bullying problem are:

- Unexplainable injuries
- Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics, or jewelry
- Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick or faking illness
- Changes in eating habits, like suddenly skipping meals or binge eating. Kids may come home from school hungry because they did not eat lunch.
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school
- Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations
- Feelings of helplessness or decreased self-esteem
- Self-destructive behaviours such as running away from home, harming themselves, or talking about suicide

Approaches To Dealing With Bullying At Aysgarth

If You Come Across Bullying What Can You Do?

- Remain calm; you are in charge. Reacting emotionally may add to the bully's fun. Take the incident or report seriously. Take action as quickly as possible. Think carefully about whether your action needs to be private or public; who are the pupils involved?
- Reassure the victim(s); do not make them feel inadequate or foolish. Offer help, advice and support to the victim(s).
- Decide what approach is appropriate in addressing the incident(s)
    - If there are several people involved and it is the first incident of this type or involving these people, the solution-focused approach may be appropriate.
    - If this is a recurrence, then a more direct approach may be appropriate

- Inform either the Headmaster, the Deputy Headmasters, Housemaster or Form Tutor of the incident and your view on how it should be addressed.

Solution Focused Approach

If an incident or incidents have been observed or reported, then a simple seven-step procedure can be adopted by a teacher or a facilitator.

A summarised guide to the Solution Focused Approach

1. talk with the victim – get the victim to describe how they feel rather than trying to discover all factual information – record any information which can remain confidential
2. convene a meeting with people involved
3. explain problem to group
4. share responsibility – try and solve problem initially rather than looking to blame or punish
5. ask group for their ideas in problem solving
6. leave it to them
7. follow up meeting (about a week later)

Direct Approach

Steps if the Solution Focused approach is not successful or is not appropriate:

1. Make it plain to the bully that you disapprove.
2. Encourage the bully to see the victim's point of view.
3. Punish the bully if you have to, but be careful how you do this.
4. Reacting aggressively or punitively gives the message that it is all right to bully if you have the power.
5. Explain clearly the punishment and why it is being given.
6. Inform colleagues if the incident arose out of a situation where everyone should be vigilant.

Whichever approach is adopted, the Headmaster will inform both sets of parents if necessary and will put their minds at rest.

After an incident:

- Do make sure the incident does not live on through reminders from you.
- DO NOT be over-protective and refuse to allow the victim to help himself.
- DO NOT assume the bully is bad through and through.
- DO NOT keep the whole incident a secret.

If there are still problems after punishments, then the Headmaster may feel it necessary to write to and/or invite parents in to discuss further measures which may involve suspension or exclusion.

Supporting perpetrator and victims of abuse

The school will support both the perpetrator and the victim of any incident or abuse. These will be provided on an individual basis and may include the following:

- Pastoral support for the pupil with a teacher of the pupil's choice
- Pastoral support with a member of the SMT
- Care or welfare plan could be created
- Counselling sessions with the school counsellor or outside agencies.
- Support from Teenagers Translated.

Preventing Methods Before Any Bullying Incidents Occur (Pro-Action)

- Encourage colleagues to be watchful and discuss potential problems. Duty staff must be aware of potential trouble spots and patrol these areas regularly. Discuss bullying openly at staff meetings and with the pupils, especially in PSHE/RE/RSE lessons and Form Tutor lessons.
- The school raises awareness of bullying through staff training so that the principles of the school policy are understood, legal responsibilities are known, action is defined to resolve and prevent problems, and sources of support are available.
- The school, when needed, will invest in specialised skills to understand the needs of their pupils in relation to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) pupils.
- Make certain that all pupils know that the school does not allow bullying and does care. All pupils must be encouraged to speak out about bullying. Any bystander who does nothing to report it is condoning bullying.
- For pupils who have shown evidence of bullying tendencies, it may be appropriate to consider mentoring – identified pupils may have guidance from senior pupils or members of staff to help them understand more about their actions.
- Use of outside speakers – e.g local police force, government agencies to make pupils more aware of bullying issues
- Enable pupils to use and make aware (also staff) of different anti-bullying websites

www.bullying.co.uk
Kidscape - Help With Bullying
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying
www.childline.org
https://cyberbullying.org/

- All proactive work towards preventing bullying, before incidents occur, should also be backed up by PSHE lessons, RE/RSE lessons and the Wellbeing Programme, form tutor periods and through house meetings.
- All pupils, as part of the REW scheme, complete an 'online' annual bullying survey created by the school to help monitor and plan out discussions or actions with the pupils. This data is used as a collective school group and can also be filtered into individual year groups and by individual questions.

A Statement of Policy And Action To Be Taken In Case Of Bullying And Associated Offences Of A Serious Nature

If a pupil is found being bullied or reports that he has been or is being bullied:

1. A member of staff should talk to the pupils concerned and decide on what approach to adopt, involving the Headmaster, Deputy Headmasters or Housemaster. The options are the Solution Focused Approach or the Direct Approach.
2. Initiate the approach decided upon.
3. All incidents of bullying should be recorded on the school database in the 'Other' category
4. Bullies may be punished for their actions, which may also involve letters home to both the bully's parents and the victim's parents, and/ or both sets of parents being invited into school to discuss their child"s actions or problems.
5. Further bullying offences may involve suspension, which is at the headmaster's discretion
6. If a bully has been suspended and, having returned to school, offends again, he may be told to leave the school altogether.

The steps described above will be taken at the discretion of the Headmaster and the Deputy Headmasters who, after a thorough examination of the facts at each stage and discussion with members of staff and parents, will implement them as they see fit and will inform the interested parties accordingly. In very serious incidents, it may be appropriate to skip some of these steps.

Each step taken and warning given will be recorded by the Deputy Headmasters and the Headmaster.

Early Years Foundation Stage

All our children have a right to play and learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment. If behavioural expectations are consistent and reasonable boundaries are put in place by caring and supportive practitioners, it can minimise the occurrence of bullying. Children in Nursery and Reception are encouraged to behave towards each other with kindness and consideration. They are taught the 'Golden Rules', which form the basis of expectations of behaviour in the Early Years and throughout the Pre Prep department, through stories, role play, puppets, circle time and PSED focus lessons.

The Golden Rules are :

- We are gentle: We don't hurt others.
- We are kind and helpful: We don't hurt anybody's feelings.
- We listen: We don't interrupt
- We are honest: We don't cover up the truth
- We work hard: We don't waste our own or others' time
- We look after property: We don't waste or damage things

All staff are responsible for encouraging all children to keep the 'Golden Rules', and to lead by example.

We recognise that young children are developing their personalities and friendships, as well as exploring boundaries and appropriate behaviour which can result in conflict and clashes of personality. Fully understanding each child and observing them helps with a restorative approach

We explain to children why some forms of behaviour are unacceptable and hurtful to others. We teach children the skills to manage any situation in which they feel uncomfortable, as soon as they are able. They are taught to say, 'Stop, you are hurting me' or 'Stop, I do not like that', and to seek the help of an adult if the situation continues. Staff will intervene if necessary, and in any situation if they see a child being hurt.

If any level of bullying is suspected, observed or reported, the matter will be taken seriously, dealt with promptly and all parties will be supported appropriately and fairly. This will involve working towards a shared understanding of the causes of the behaviour. We understand that all behaviour is a form of communication and should be recognised as such. Matters will be documented as necessary and reported to the Headmaster and parents if deemed necessary.

We will speak openly with parents/carers in order to formulate a mutual agreement regarding action to move the situation forward in a way which meets individual needs.

If a child persists in hurtful or inappropriate behaviour, then the parents will be invited to discuss the situation with their child's teacher and the Headmaster, and to agree to a joint approach to address the problem. If necessary, outside agencies will be contacted in order to support the school, child and parents/carers.

Information in the Pupils'' Calendar

AYSGARTH SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

You are bullying if you are making another person's life unpleasant or unhappy. The person doing it may see it as 'just a game' and may not be aware that what they are doing is bullying. It can take many forms:

- Through what is said
- Through what is done

Stopping bullying is very important in making this school a happy place for everyone.

If You Come Across Bullying What Can You Do?

- Remain calm; Reacting emotionally may add to the bully's fun. Take action as quickly as possible by talking to an adult or prefect.
- Reassure the victim(s); do not make them feel inadequate or foolish. Encourage them to talk to an adult.
- Bullies will make you believe that telling someone will make things worse. **THIS IS NOT TRUE.**

The Childline telephone number is 0800111
The Children's Commissioner for England telephone number is 08005280731

help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk