



Anti-Bullying Policy

May 2025

Review Date: May 2026

Introduction

At Wickham Church of England Primary School we aim to provide a safe, caring and friendly environment for learning. This includes encouraging open discussion around differences between people, challenging prejudice and celebrating diversity. We recognise that a school has a responsibility to understand the community they serve and to respond to identified concerns including proactively teaching children about potential threats to their health and safety. We will therefore adopt a contextual approach to bullying and peer on peer abuse, working with families and outside agencies where appropriate.

We expect pupils to act safely and feel safe in school, as reflected in our school rules of 'Ready, Respectful, Safe'. We expect pupils to understand the issues relating to all forms of bullying and that they feel confident to seek support from school should they feel they or others are unsafe. We would also want parents/carers to feel confident that their children are safe and cared for in school and that incidents, if/when they do arise, are dealt with promptly and effectively.

The school is aware of its legal obligations including the Equality Act 2010. This means as well as considering the context of any concerns which need addressing, we will consider where a pupil may have a protected characteristic. This will include ensuring any action taken by the school reflects their needs and that any actions taken by the school do not put the pupil at greater harm. This policy is available on the school website and from the school office.

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) in our school is Graham Cutter, headteacher. The deputy designated

safeguarding Leads are Loren Way, Hollie Shilling and Amber Palmer. Safeguarding is the responsibility of all, however all staff, parents and pupils need to be aware of who to report to and how to report any safeguarding concerns. The anti-bullying co-ordinators are the PSHE leader, Rachel Holmes and deputy headteacher, Loren Way.

The responsibilities are:

- Policy development and review involving pupils, staff, governors, parents/carers and relevant local agencies
- Implementing the policy and monitoring and assessing its effectiveness in practice
- Ensuring evaluation takes place and that this informs policy review
- Managing bullying incidents
- Managing the reporting and recording of bullying incidents
- Assessing and coordinating training and support for staff and parents/carers where appropriate
- Coordinating strategies for preventing bullying behaviour.

Definition of Bullying

Adults and children in our school have also decided upon a definition of bullying. Together we decided that:

'Bullying takes place when a person or a group of people deliberately try to hurt or upset another person or group of people on more than one occasion'

Children may be hurt or upset by other children's behaviour but this only becomes *bullying* if it is *repeated deliberately*.

We define **cyber bullying** as *the use of technology, particularly mobile phones, the internet and social media to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others.*

We recognise cyberbullying as an extension of face-to-face bullying, with technology providing another bullying behaviour to harass their target. We recognise that cyberbullying can have a particularly negative impact because it can invade home and personal space. There are also challenges for example in controlling electronically circulated messages; the size of the audience; perceived anonymity; and even the profile of the person doing the bullying and their target. Ongoing changes to technology mean the methods used to bully keep evolving.

Bullying is not one-off acts of aggression or nastiness, such behaviours if repeated, however, may be viewed as bullying.

Behaviour often associated with bullying

Baiting: Baiting can be used in bullying both on and offline. It can be used to bully someone to get 'a rise' out of them and it can be used to antagonise those who might be bullying others to get them to bully. Sometimes baiting is used secretly to try and get a person to explode in a rage or react negatively/loudly so that they get into trouble.

Banter: The dictionary describes banter as: 'the playful and friendly exchange of teasing remarks.' Bullying is often justified as being just banter. It may start as banter, but some types of banter are bullying and need to be addressed as bullying.

Peer on Peer Abuse: All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as peer on peer abuse). This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to: Bullying (including cyberbullying); Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; Sexual violence; Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse; Upskirting; Sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals. We will challenge and respond to any concerns related to the above. For more information, see our safeguarding policy.

Occasionally an incident may be deemed to be bullying even if the behaviour has not been repeated or persistent – if it fulfils all other descriptions of bullying. This possibility should be considered, particularly in cases of hate crime related bullying and cyberbullying and peer on peer abuse. If the target or alleged perpetrator might be in danger, then intervention is urgently required including a safeguarding referral.

Friendship issues, relational conflict and bullying behaviour

We acknowledge that friendship problems and bullying behaviour can be upsetting for both pupils and parents/carers, 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.

Pupils will fall in and out with each other, have arguments, stop talking to each other and have disagreements. This relational conflict can be a normal part of growing up. During a relational conflict or friendship problem groups of pupils may disagree, be very upset and find it difficult to resolve the disagreement without adult help. It is unlikely however, to be repeated behaviour and may even be accidental, but pupils will make an effort to resolve the problem and will want to resolve the problem.

However, we recognise that repeated friendship problems or relational conflict can sometimes lead to bullying behaviour particularly when there is an imbalance of power (when a group acts against an individual for example).

What does bullying look like?

Bullying behaviour can be:

- Physical – pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching etc.
- Verbal - name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling.
- Emotional – isolating others, tormenting, hiding books, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidating, excluding, manipulation and coercion.
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films etc.
- Online /cyber – posting on social media, sharing photos, sending nasty text messages, social exclusion.

- Indirect - Can include the exploitation of individuals such as false friendships, criminal exploitation, sexual exploitation and radicalization.

Although bullying can occur between individuals it can often take place in the presence (virtually or physically) of others who become the 'bystanders' or 'accessories'. Bullying can take place between:

- young people
- young people and staff
- between staff
- individuals or groups

Prejudice Related Bullying

Bullying is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, on the grounds of ethnicity, religion and belief, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation or disability. It might be motivated by actual differences, perceived differences or as a result of association with someone else.

We record these forms of prejudiced based bullying by their type and report on them to the local authority. This is in recognition that these groups are protected by the Equality Act 2010 because of the prejudice experienced by some groups in the wider society. We also recognise that there are others groups of children and young people who may be vulnerable to bullying including children in care, young carers or those with mental health issues. We recognise therefore that we sometimes have to look at develop specific work or practice to prevent bullying of groups of pupils.

Under the Equalities Act 2010 it is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of:

- age
- being or becoming a trans person
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or having a child
- disability
- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, including Gypsy, Roma, Traveller heritage
- religion, belief or lack of religion/belief
- sex /gender
- sexual orientation

These are called 'protected characteristics'. As part of the requirement on schools to promote fundamental British values, schools must proactively challenge derogatory and discriminatory language and behaviour.

Other vulnerable groups include:

- young carers
- looked after children
- bullying related to home circumstances
- bullying related to appearance or health

Although the above do not currently receive protection under the Equality Act 2010, bullying for these reasons is just as serious.

There is no hierarchy of bullying - all forms should be taken equally seriously and dealt with appropriately.

Prejudice Based Incidents

This is a one-off incident which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility, prejudice or ignorance, based on a person's perceived or actual ethnicity, gender, disability, religion, beliefs, sexual orientation or gender identity or their association with someone from one of these groups. These can also include indirect prejudice driven behaviour that is not targeted at one individual. The impact of this expression of prejudice against an equality group whether intentional or not can be damaging and must therefore be responded to as a prejudice based or hate incident.

One-off incidents are not bullying, however we separately record prejudiced based incidents identified using the above definition as we recognise the impact they can have and that they could be an indicator of bullying behaviour or contribute to an environment where bullying could happen.

Hate crime and bullying

There is no legal definition of a hate crime. However, the police and the CPS (Crown Prosecution Service) have an agreed definition of hate crime as: "Any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's race or perceived race; religion or perceived religion; sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation; disability or perceived disability and any crime motivated by hostility or prejudice against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender."

There is a distinction between a hate crime and a hate incident. "A hate incident is any incident which the victim, or anyone else, thinks is based on someone's prejudice towards them because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or because they are transgender." However, a hate incident does not necessarily break the law. Where a hate incident amounts to a criminal offence, and is based on one of the five protected characteristics, it is known as a hate crime. The type of conduct which will be considered as a hate incident is wide ranging and includes the following:

- verbal abuse;
- harassment;
- bullying or intimidation;
- physical attacks;
- threats of violence;
- hoax calls, abusive phone or text messages, hate mail;
- online abuse;
- displaying or circulating discriminatory literature or posters;
- graffiti;
- arson;
- throwing rubbish in a garden; and
- malicious complaints.

Any concerns about hate incidents/crimes should be discussed with a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Information on how to report a hate crime can be found at <https://www.report-it.org.uk/home>.

Children can report any crime anonymously at <https://www.fearless.org/>.

Bullying outside of school

We understand that bullying behaviour can take place on the way to and from school or in the wider community and can have a significant impact on a pupils' wellbeing and their ability to learn. We recognise that cyberbullying in particular can mean that a child or young person can experience bullying behaviour throughout their day and including when they are at home. Therefore, we act to prevent and respond to bullying behaviour outside of school as far as we are able to. We may seek support from the Police and or Children's Services to help us to do this

Cyberbullying

The increasing use of digital technology and the internet has also provided new and particularly intrusive ways for bullies to reach their victims. Cyberbullying can take many forms and bullying online can often start in school and then be progressed online or start online and influence behaviour in school. Whilst most incidents of cyberbullying occur outside school, we will offer support and guidance to parents/carers and their children who experience online bullying and will treat cyberbullying with the same severity as any other form of bullying. Cyberbullying can include:

- hacking into someone's accounts/sites
- Posting prejudice /hate messages
- Impersonating someone on line
- Public posting of images
- Exclusion
- Threats and manipulation
- Stalking

We will ensure that our children are taught safe ways to use the internet (see our online safety policy) and encourage good online behaviour.

Prevention of bullying

We use a range of strategies to prevent bullying behaviour:

- The school's core Christian values of love, courage and respect are promoted across the school day and the curriculum
- PSHE education and other curriculum subjects are used to promote social and emotional skills including those needed to work together, show empathy, build friendships, get support and help others
- Small group work interventions are used to support those who need extra help to develop their social and emotional aspects of learning
- PSHE education lessons are used to develop understanding of safety and how to stay safe
- E-safety is taught across the curriculum

- PSHE education lessons are used to develop understanding of bullying, its impact and ways to respond to bullying situations. PSHE education is also used to develop understanding of similarity and differences and the unacceptability of all forms of prejudice and bullying
- Regular whole school collective worships are also used to develop understanding of bullying, its impact and encourage reporting
- The whole school participates in annual activities for anti-bullying week and a rolling programme of other events such as Black History Month, LGBT History Month, International Women's Day, Refugee Awareness Week, UK Disability History Month etc.
- The Young Governors provides a forum for discussing any bullying issues and for the pupils to decide ways of preventing it and supporting those who are bullied.
- A rich menu of play possibilities is used to reduce potential conflict during break-time and lunchtime, including activities organised and run by the school's sports leader.
- The core Christian values of the school and the school rules of 'ready, respectful, safe' are upheld at all times.
- All staff monitor behaviour and intervene when it becomes necessary to address friendship problems and prevent bullying from developing.

Reporting and responding to bullying

Early identification of bullying is the most effective way of minimising bullying behaviour and the effects on the person being bullied. We also acknowledge that the pupil doing the bullying behaviour needs to understand that their behaviour is unacceptable and will need support to change their behaviour and explore the underlying reasons for bullying.

Pupils are encouraged to report any harmful or hurtful behaviour, even if they are not sure whether it is bullying. They are encouraged to report for themselves or for their friends. They can do this through:

- Speaking to their class teacher
- Speaking to another trusted adult in the school community
- Speaking to a parent/other adult who may then contact the school in any of the ways listed
- Speaking to a friend and asking the friend to help tell an adult
- Calling a confidential helpline such as ChildLine.

In our school, we teach children to stand up for ourselves and each other (be an upstander) and not stand by (be a bystander).

Parents and carers **must** inform us if they think or know there is a problem for their own child or for another child. They can do this by speaking to their child's class teacher, the school's ELSA (Mrs Palmer) or a member of the school's senior leadership team.

Recording bullying

All incidents of bullying behaviour must be recorded. All incidents are recorded according to type and these are recorded on CPOMS by staff so that the school can monitor the individual incidents, but also monitor incidents across the school. This monitoring will inform the PSHE education curriculum and our collective worship programme.

The school also records prejudiced based incidents using the same system

Responding to bullying

All pupils have a role to play to intervene to support their peers (if it is safe to do so) and to report bullying:

- Alert an adult in school to any concerns
- Talk to your friends about the situation
- Above all always tell someone. Adults will usually need to intervene to stop bullying behaviour
- All of us have a responsibility to avoid encouraging or inciting bullying behaviour and to not stand by and let someone else be harmed.

Pupils (if you have been bullied)

- If you feel able to and it is safe to do so, ask the child showing bullying behaviour to stop, ignore it, say no and walk away
- Try not show you are upset or angry, but remember this is not your fault
- Tell a friend what is happening and ask for their support
- Tell a trusted adult in or out of school (ask a friend to go with you if it helps)
- Do not delete evidence of online bullying as it can be used as evidence
- It is possible the situation will take time to resolve, but unless you tell someone, we cannot help you – and we can make sure you are safe

Parents and carers

- Listen and talk to your child about the situation and discuss and agree next steps
- Contact the school if you are worried or concerned
- Monitor social networks/computer use
- Reinforce the value of good behaviour

School Staff

- Take seriously any report of bullying behaviour
- Record it and report it
- An appropriate member of staff will then investigate the bullying case and will:
 - Speak with the person targeted for bullying behaviour and involve them in what they would like to happen next
 - Speak to the pupil carrying out the bullying behaviour and find out their perspectives
 - Find witnesses to explain what they saw
 - Contact and involve the parents and carers of those targeted and the parents and carers of those doing the bullying behaviour
- We will (age appropriately) challenge the behaviour and ideas of the person doing the bullying and help them to understand that what they said or did was hurtful and not in line with the school's values, ethos or policies
- We will consider the intentions of the perpetrator before helping him or her develop a repair plan
- We will let other pupils that have witnessed the incident know that the behaviour was unacceptable and that it is being dealt with

- We will keep the target of bullying behaviour and their parents and carers informed about progress and any actions taken and a review date
- We will record on CPOMS whether the incident has been resolved and whether the target and their parents or carers are satisfied with the outcome
- We will identify clear times to 'check in' with those involved (and including parents and carers) to ensure issues have been resolved.

Where bullying behaviour is denied and evidence is hard to find, those involved will be closely observed and monitored. Any pupils who feel they are being bullied will be checked in with regularly by a designated adult.

Head teacher and governors

- Reports of bullying and prejudiced based incidents will be made by the headteacher / Senior Leadership Team to the governing body
- The headteacher and the governing body will monitor the effectiveness of this policy in discussion with the Young Governors and the staff in school and will be involved in any unresolved concerns raised by pupils or parents and carers about bullying in the school community.

Consequences

Sanctions by themselves are unlikely to change bullying behaviour but we may need to make decisions to keep the target of bullying behaviour safe (eg preventing a child who has used bullying behaviour from playing outside) or to help the child who has shown bullying behaviour learn some skills. These will be case and child-specific.

Parents/carers of those involved will be informed of actions taken, however, due to GDPR requirements, we are unable to discuss private information about other children. This includes any specific support in place for them and any consequences for bullying and prejudice-based incidents.

All actions/consequences will be recorded and kept on file using CPOMS.

Complaints

We have a clear complaints procedure for parents who are not satisfied with the school's actions. This is available online or from the school office.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This document will be monitored and evaluated regularly and updated to take account of new Government and local guidance, and the views of the whole school community.