



# **Anti-Bullying Policy**

## **2024-2025**

**Further review due January 2025 – Sherborne Schools Group**

### **Anti-bullying policy statement**

The overarching aim of the School is to provide an education, based on Christian values, that enriches pupils' lives, develops their character, confidence and capacity to learn, and prepares them for the complex challenges and opportunities of modern adult life in an ever-changing world.

A further aim is to provide a pastoral education that nurtures physical and spiritual health, emotional, moral and social maturity and an appreciation of relationships and responsibilities in the wider world. This education should foster respect for the needs of others, for the importance of co-operation and collaboration, and for the responsibilities of living in any community. We believe that we are a community that celebrates diversity rather than merely tolerating it.

The School, at all times, expects the highest standards of morality, integrity and honesty from all who work and study here.

### **Aims**

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1. to define bullying behaviour
2. to state clearly that bullying is always unacceptable
3. to suggest actions to be taken to prevent or reduce the incidence of bullying behaviour
4. to suggest ways of monitoring pupils' behaviour in general and the incidence of bullying behaviour in particular
5. to state procedures to deal with alleged incidents of bullying

This policy gives due regard to the DfE document 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (July 2017).

#### **1. Definition of bullying behaviour**

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'Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally'. (DfE - 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (July 2017)).

Bullying behaviour is any repeated behaviour which intentionally hurts or causes distress by taking advantage of another person in some way, making him or her feel uncomfortable, humiliated, frightened, helpless or threatened. Bullying behaviour may occur directly or via cyber-technology.

Examples of bullying behaviour are:

- hitting, kicking, pushing people around, spitting
- name calling, taunting, teasing, insulting
- intimidating, isolating or excluding from the group
- spreading rumours or writing unkind notes
- using improperly any form of e-technology, such as computers and mobile phones
- inappropriate use of images and video
- taking, damaging or hiding possessions
- demanding money
- talking to or touching someone in a sexually inappropriate way
- initiation or hazing type violence
- gaslighting
- ghosting
- bystanding

Bullying will often involve more than one form. The School is determined that no type of bullying will be tolerated by staff, pupils, or parents at Sherborne Prep; abuse is abuse and will not be tolerated or passed off as ‘banter’ or ‘part of growing up’.

Bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and victim. As a consequence, those being bullied will find it difficult to defend themselves. The power imbalance may manifest itself in a number of ways including physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of someone through the threat of violence or by isolating them physically or online.

Low level disruption and the use of offensive language can also have a significant impact. Pupils learn best in a safe and calm environment that is free from disruption. If such behaviour is left unchallenged or dismissed as ‘banter’ or ‘horseplay’ it can lead to reluctance to report other behaviour. Early intervention, whether in a lesson, during activities or in the boarding house, helps to set clear expectations and boundaries regarding what are acceptable and unacceptable behaviours and helps to stop negative behaviours from escalating. By stepping in to prevent such behaviour, the School creates a safe, disciplined environment where pupils are able to learn and fulfil their potential.

The School will also act upon bullying that occurs during holidays and outside of the School’s premises. This includes, for example, incidents that occur in town or on public transport.

In this document the terms “perpetrator” and “victim” are used. “Perpetrator” is used for someone who has manifested bullying behaviour; “victim” is used for someone who has received bullying behaviour. The terms are used for ease of reference. There is no suggestion that these are discrete categories of people, or that their involvement in bullying behaviour is necessarily either pervasive or persistent.

All aspects of bullying behaviour affect the victim. A victim may be bullied because of prejudice against particular groups. This can apply to age, physical appearance, nationality, culture, race, gender, sex, sexual orientation (LGBTQ), religion, political or immigration status, home background, different family situations, special educational or health needs and disability (SEND) or because a pupil is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. A pupil can also be bullied if they are new in the School, appear to be uncertain or have no friends. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. A pupil may also become a target because of an irrational decision by the perpetrator.

Bullying behaviour may hurt or distress the victim and, over a period of time, can lower their self-esteem and make them depressed. It can be a barrier to learning and have a serious impact upon mental health. In extreme cases, bullying, especially if it is left unaddressed, can cause psychological damage, pronounced social, emotional or mental health difficulties.

The School recognises that bullying can occur from staff to staff, from staff to pupil, from pupil to staff, from pupil to pupil, from parent to staff, from staff to parent, from parent to pupil and from pupil to parent. The School considers all forms of bullying unacceptable and recognises the potential that bullying has to damage an individual's self-belief and confidence long after the incidents have happened.

The nature and level of support provided for a pupil will depend upon the individual circumstances and the level of need. Such support can include that provided by the teachers, DHP, engaging with parents, and working with external agencies. The School has a directory of counsellors that the parents of pupils can access. In addition, the School will always work with external agencies (such as Social Care or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)) to support best the pupils in our care. We recognise that some forms of harassing or threatening behaviour/communications are a criminal offence and will seek assistance from the Police in such cases.

## **2. School code on bullying**

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All reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that, so far as it is possible, every pupil feels safe and happy at School and feels supported and protected at all times.

The School expects all members of the School Community to uphold the School Code on Bullying which is included in the Prep diaries and readily available to all pupils:

1. Every pupil at Sherborne Prep has the right to enjoy his/her learning and leisure time free from intimidation.
2. Our School Community will not tolerate unkind actions or remarks, even when these were not intended to hurt.
3. To stand by, when someone else is being bullied, is to support bullying.
4. If you are being bullied, or you know of someone who is being bullied you should report this to a member of staff or a responsible senior pupil.
5. Bullying will always be taken seriously.

## **3. Ways of preventing or reducing the incidence of bullying**

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Bullying thrives in secrecy, so the chief aim is to lower the 'threshold of disclosure' which deters bullied children from telling adults what is happening – often for weeks on end – and thus encourages bullies to continue or even to escalate their actions. This threshold of disclosure can be lowered and bullying occurring less likely by the following methods:

1. An open, positive, caring and trusting atmosphere is nurtured in the School.
2. Staff:
  - a) celebrate achievement
  - b) provide support
  - c) anticipate problems
  - d) discipline sensibly and fairly
  - e) make opportunities to listen to pupils
  - f) act as advocates of pupils.
3. Pupils are encouraged to feel able to share problems with staff:
  - a) to turn to anyone they trust if they have a problem
  - b) not to feel guilty about airing complaints.
4. Pupils are informed that bullying will not be tolerated in the School.
5. Meals are pleasant social occasions.
6. Practices that support the Equality Act (2010) are observed in School and the Boarding House:
  - a) any discriminatory words and behaviour are treated as unacceptable
  - b) positive attitudes towards difference are fostered through the curriculum and tutorials.
7. The PD and PSP programmes tackle bullying as an issue at age-appropriate stages. This includes discussion on:
  - a) Who is the "perpetrator"? Who is the "victim"?
  - b) Why are some "bullies" and others "victims"?
  - c) Differences between people and the importance of avoiding language based on prejudice.
  - c) What should a pupil do if they are bullied?
  - d) What constitutes bullying? Where are boundaries?
  - e) Who do I go to if I am being bullied?
  - f) What is a bystander?

Bullying is also the subject of assemblies, lectures and can be discussed in the context of plays and the study of literature.

8. Appropriate training in all aspects of care is arranged through formal inset and Staff meetings, to ensure that staff have the necessary professional skills, especially:

- a) the risk and indications of child abuse and bullying, and how to deal with cases
  - b) the principles of the School policy
  - c) their legal responsibilities
  - d) available sources of support
9. In the Boarding House:
- a) there is an appropriate staff presence
  - b) staff are actively involved with pupils and in all areas of the House when they are on duty
  - c) attempts are made to avoid boredom and lack of purpose among pupils
  - d) there is space available for pupils' quiet withdrawal
  - e) there is no crowding in bedrooms or common rooms.
10. There are opportunities for pupils to undertake positions of responsibility.
11. The responsibilities of senior pupils are appropriately limited.
12. Staff realise the pastoral role of Ambassadors and senior boarders and offer appropriate support.
13. Older boarders are encouraged to keep an eye on younger boarders, offering support where needed.
16. Staff are aware that concerns must always be shared as no single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances and what might appear to one member of staff as a one-off minor incident may very well not be. Everyone has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action so as to act in the best interests of the child.
18. The Pastoral Team ensure that records are kept of bullying incidents allowing patterns to be identified and the effectiveness of the School's approach to be evaluated. This data is reported to the Governors' Pastoral committee. In addition, an annual report is made to the governing body through the Governors' Pastoral Committee on the prevention of bullying and the anti-bullying strategies being followed by the School. The policy will be reviewed as part of this process.

#### **4. Monitoring pupils' behaviour, including bullying**

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The School proactively gathers information about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict and will always act to prevent bullying occurring in the first place:

1. Members of staff are vigilant at all times, but particularly outside rooms before and between lessons, during meals and break times.
2. PD sessions regularly cover anti bullying

3. Teachers regularly discuss relationships, including bullying, with their tutees.
4. Record-keeping on the welfare and development of individual pupils:
  - a) is efficient and well-maintained
  - b) is sensitive to individual changes
  - c) includes all relevant information to provide staff with information about welfare at all times
  - d) enables staff to spot changes in the well-being of individuals in time to take appropriate action.
5. The Deputy Head Pastoral monitors the Bullying Incident Logs and Pastoral Notes held on CPOMS regularly.

## **5. Procedures to deal with alleged incidents of bullying**

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1. Where there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, 'significant harm'' a bullying incident will be addressed as a child protection concern under the Children Act 1989. In the event of such disclosures about pupil-on-pupil abuse, all the children involved, whether perpetrator or victim, are treated as being at risk. Where this is the case, staff must discuss their concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who will report the concerns to Dorset or Somerset Children's Services and work with them and other relevant external agencies as to the appropriate action to take, including the timing of informing parents. Parents will be informed as soon as possible, unless it is not in the best interests of the child to do so.
2. Any pupil being bullied or knowing that someone is being bullied (by whatever means, and whether or not the bullying has occurred inside School) should report what is happening to a member of staff within the School or parents/guardians, in accordance with the School Code on Bullying. The following are available:
  - the Head or Deputy Head Pastoral (DSL)
  - Deputy DSLs
  - Form teachers
  - Independent tutors
  - Housemaster, or any other teacher
  - Matron or another member of House Staff
  - Independent Person

A pupil may also wish to contact:

- Dorset Social Care and Health (01202 228866)
- ChildLine (0800 1111)

- Dept for Education (03700 002288)
- Office of the Children's Commissioner for England (0800 5280731),  
[www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)

3. A victim or a witness of bullying may be uncertain about taking this step, for a variety of reasons:
  - a) they are afraid of 'telling tales'
  - b) they do not want the perpetrator to be punished
  - c) they are afraid of what the perpetrator will do
  - d) they have become demoralised and feel that they do not deserve any better.

There should be an atmosphere within the School which encourages pupils to be completely open regarding bullying. Moreover, pupils should be encouraged to realise that it is always better to tell someone, because:

- a) sharing what is happening will help the victim to deal with their feelings
  - b) bullying thrives on secrecy – it is best dealt with by being brought into the open
  - c) it may save other people from becoming victims of the same perpetrator.
4. Any member of staff who learns of alleged bullying behaviour should:
    - a) firstly, offer advice and support to the alleged victim
    - b) report the allegation to the Deputy Head Pastoral of the pupils involved (i.e. both victim and perpetrator).
  5. The DHP will record this in the Anti-Bullying Incident Log on CPOMS and, if they consider it appropriate, interview both the alleged victim and perpetrator and any possible witnesses. The members of staff carrying out the interviews will take into account any relevant specific SEND needs of the pupils involved and will adjust their approach accordingly. These interviews will be recorded in Anti-Bullying protocol, together with action taken in the case as a whole.
  6. In many cases where it is felt that bullying has taken place, the action in the first instance may not be disciplinary. It may sometimes be the case that the perpetrator genuinely has not recognised the distress caused to the victim by his/her behaviour. It may also be judged preferable to issue a warning before sanctions are applied. Regardless of whether disciplinary action is taken, an educative response to the incident must be made. The motivations behind the bullying behaviour will be considered paying attention to whether it reveals any concerns for the safety of the perpetrator. Where this is found to be the case the child engaging in the bullying behaviour will also need appropriate support.
  7. However, if the pupil responsible for the bullying behaviour repeats it, sanctions will be applied in conjunction with further pastoral education in this area. The aim is always to show clearly that bullying behaviour is wrong. Ultimately, a perpetrator who does not change their behaviour may have to leave the School.
  8. It is essential that teachers of both the victim and the perpetrator continue to monitor the situation regularly. The relevant teachers should discuss their findings regularly during the first



few weeks after an alleged incident, until they are satisfied that further incidents are unlikely. They should record their results in the Anti-Bullying Incident Log on CPOMS.

9. Teachers and the Housemaster (for boarders) must notify the DSL of all alleged bullying incidents. Copies of interviews, incident reports and a recommended course of action should be sent as a written report to the DSL within 24 hours of the incident occurring.
10. An appropriate teacher or the DHP will notify parents of both the victim and the perpetrator about the case and any action taken.
11. The teacher with the DHP should consider sharing information with some or all colleagues, in order that they may be alert to the need to monitor certain pupils closely.
12. The welfare of the victim should be considered of paramount importance. The pupil should be informed of any actions taken. They may need help to deal with their feelings and to understand and overcome their vulnerability.
13. The perpetrator should be given help and support in trying to change their behaviour.
14. Where appropriate, the School will draw upon external services to support a pupil who is experiencing bullying. The same is true to tackle an underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying behaviour.

## **6. Procedure to be followed when investigating an alleged incident of bullying**

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1. The selected appropriate member of staff interviews the alleged victim, perpetrator and any witnesses separately, in order to establish the facts of the case. The staff member will take into account any relevant specific SEND needs of the pupils involved and will adjust the approach taken during interview accordingly. The Housemaster in cases of boarders or an appropriate alternative member of staff will be present.
2. A summary of the findings will be sent to the Head, and the Deputy Head (Pastoral).
3. The Deputy Head (Pastoral) will also interview the alleged perpetrator, in order:
  - a) to confirm the facts of the case, if considered necessary
  - b) to establish a course of action to help the perpetrator and, if considered necessary, to issue a warning of sanctions or apply them.
4. The Deputy Head Pastoral, Head of Pre-Prep (if a Pre-Prep child is involved) will notify the parents of the pupils concerned, informing them of action taken. At this stage, it might be appropriate for individual behaviour management plans to be put in place.

5. Relevant staff monitor the situation, evaluate the effectiveness of the approach adopted and raise staff awareness of the specific situation.
6. If the victim does not feel that the procedure set out above has resolved the issue, they should inform their form teacher or DHP.
7. If the victim's parents do not feel that the procedures detailed above have resolved the issue, they should follow the procedure laid out within the School's Complaints Policy.
8. The DSL will inform relevant external agencies as soon as possible.

Note: The term DSL applies to both the Lead DSL (Deputy Head Pastoral) and the Deputy DSLs.

## **7. Cyber bullying**

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The School's ICT Acceptable Use Policy and parent/pupil/school agreement contains further information on what the Schools does to try to prevent and tackle Cyber-bullying.

The term refers to any form of bullying that takes place using electronic technology, for example text messaging, images or video-clips, email, chat rooms, social media or gaming activities, instant messaging, web logs, online personal polling sites, personal websites and so on. The opportunities for bullying within this sphere are growing as the technology becomes more widespread. Cyber-bullying can occur at any time of the day and has a potentially bigger audience.

The School has the following safeguards in place:

1. All pupils, parents and members of staff are required to sign a statement of conduct agreement as part of the ICT Acceptable Use Policy.
2. All e-communications used on the School site or as part of School activities off-site are monitored.
3. School devices are supplied to the children which are controlled by the school system.
4. All access to the Internet by pupils is filtered and bars are placed on a variety of unsuitable websites.
5. All pupils are made aware of the policy with regard to the use of mobile technology.
6. The PD programme includes sessions on bullying, including cyber bullying and staying safe online.
7. Members of staff are aware of the need to be vigilant and to act accordingly when a problem arises.

8. Members of staff are able to confiscate electronic technology from pupils if the technology is being used inappropriately.
9. The School's search policy applies to electronic devices.
10. Day children are not permitted to bring a mobile phone to school. In extenuating circumstances the phone must be handed to the school office on arrival and not reclaimed until the pupil leaves at the end of the day.
11. There is a clear protocol for mobile use in the boarding house.

The Police will always be informed of serious incidents involving cyber bullying, pornographic images of a child or extreme pornographic images.

This policy has been written with reference to the following DfE publications: Preventing and Tackling Bullying (July 2017), Cyberbullying: Advice for Headteachers and School staff (Nov 2014); Behaviour and Discipline in Schools (2016) and should be considered alongside the School's Safeguarding Policy as part of the School's safeguarding procedures.

<b>Anti-Bullying Protocol</b>	<b>Pupils:</b>	<b>Date:</b>  <b>Next steps and outstanding items in red</b>
<b>Details of incident(s) to be added following interviews with parents/child</b>		
<b>If an incident of alleged bullying or cyber-bullying is reported, the following procedures are adopted:</b>		
<b>Protocol step</b>	<b>Action taken with date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
The member of staff to whom it was reported, or who first discovers the situation, will control the situation, reassure and support the pupils involved.		
He/she will inform an appropriate member of the pastoral team as soon as possible.		

<p>The member of staff will calmly explain the range of disciplinary measures that are potentially involved.</p>		
<p>The alleged victim will be interviewed on his/her own and asked to write an account of events.</p>		
<p>The alleged bully, together with all others who were involved, will be interviewed individually and asked to write an account as soon as possible of events.</p>		
<p>The victim will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team separately from the alleged perpetrator. It will be made clear to him/her why revenge is inappropriate. He/she will be offered support to develop a strategy to help him or herself.</p>		
<p>The alleged bully will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the victim, and it will be made clear why his/her behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. He/she will be offered guidance on modifying his or her behaviour, together with any appropriate disciplinary sanctions as set out in the school's Behaviour Management Policy; for example, detention, withdrawal of privileges or suspension. In particularly serious and/or persistent cases, the bully should expect extended or permanent exclusion</p>		
<p>The incident must be recorded factually and objectively with a clear statement of an initial action plan on iSAMS under anti bullying. The Deputy Head and DSL will keep a record of the incidents and outcome for all bullying and other serious disciplinary offences. If the incident becomes a child protection issue, the DSL will open a Child Protection file which is kept securely. Where the incident is confidential a paper copy of information is held securely.</p>		
<p>The DSL will inform the tutors, and Head of both the alleged bully/bullies and the victim[s] as soon as possible. An iSAMS alert will also go to relevant party inboxes. In very serious or repetitive incidents, the Head will be informed.</p>		
<p>The parents/guardians of all parties should be informed and invited into school to discuss the matter. Their support should be sought.</p>		
<p>A way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and counselling, should be agreed.</p>		
<p>The School recognises that suitable support is needed both for children who are being bullied and for pupils who bully others, as well as dealing with appropriate disciplinary measures in accordance with the school's Behaviour Management Policy.</p>		
<p>A meeting involving all the parties, with close staff supervision, could be helpful in developing a strategy for all concerned to close the episode.</p>		

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A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place.		
In very serious cases, and only after the Head has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to the Social Services. However, it is the policy of Sherborne Prep school to attempt to resolve such issues internally under the school's own disciplinary procedures, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely. The school may exclude a pupil, either temporarily or permanently, in cases of severe and persistent bullying and in the event that the support put in place for the bully does not result in the modification of behaviour to an acceptable level.		
Records on all alleged bullying, cyber-bullying and bullying outside school of which we are made aware will be kept on iSAMS in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach adopted or to enable patterns to be identified.		

**A . Bowden**  
**Deputy Head (Pastoral)**  
**(Next Review LENT 2025)**