



William Gilpin Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Anti-Bullying Policy

Date of review: September 2026

Reviewed by: Elizabeth Cox, Headteacher

Approved by: Interim Executive Board / Full Governing Body

Next review due: September 2027

1. Purpose and aims

At William Gilpin Church of England Primary School, every child has the right to feel safe, valued, respected and able to learn without fear.

Our Christian vision, "**Sharing the love of Jesus by walking alongside others in our community,**" underpins our approach to relationships and behaviour. We seek to build a community characterised by **courage, compassion and kindness**, where children learn to treat others with dignity and respect.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- define bullying and distinguish it from other forms of unkind or inappropriate behaviour
- explain how we prevent bullying and create a culture in which children feel safe to speak out
- set out how concerns about bullying will be reported, investigated and responded to
- ensure that children who experience bullying are listened to, supported and protected
- ensure that children who have caused harm are supported to understand the impact of their behaviour and make positive changes
- explain how we respond to prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying
- ensure that bullying is considered within our wider safeguarding and child-on-child abuse procedures
- set out the responsibilities of pupils, staff, parents and governors
- explain how incidents are recorded, monitored and reviewed.

2. Our commitment

Bullying is never acceptable.

We recognise that children sometimes fall out, disagree, make unkind choices or behave in ways that hurt others. These behaviours must always be addressed, but not every disagreement or act of unkindness is bullying.

Our aim is to prevent bullying by creating a culture in which children feel secure, connected and confident to seek help. We believe that addressing low-level unkindness and strengthening positive relationships can reduce the likelihood of bullying developing.

We will:

- take all concerns about bullying seriously
- listen carefully to children and consider their views
- act promptly when concerns are raised
- prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children
- investigate concerns fairly and without making assumptions
- avoid labelling children as "bullies" or "victims"

- support children who have experienced harm
- help children who have caused harm to understand the impact of their behaviour and make positive changes
- use restorative approaches where appropriate
- involve parents and carers when appropriate
- monitor situations after action has been taken to ensure that concerns have genuinely been resolved.

3. What is bullying?

We use the Department for Education definition:

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

Bullying can be physical, verbal, emotional, social or online. It may involve an imbalance of power which makes it difficult for the child experiencing bullying to defend themselves.

Bullying may be motivated by prejudice or perceived differences, including differences relating to race, religion or belief, disability, sex, sexual orientation or other protected characteristics.

A single incident is not necessarily bullying. However, **a single serious incident can still cause significant harm and will be responded to appropriately.** Children do not have to experience repeated incidents before adults take action.

4. Bullying, unkindness and conflict

Staff will consider the nature, frequency, intention, impact and context of behaviour when deciding how to respond.

Behaviour	Examples	Typical response
Unkind behaviour	A hurtful comment, excluding someone from a game or an unkind action	Promptly addressed and repaired
Conflict or disagreement	Two children falling out or disagreeing	Supported resolution and restoration
Repeated unkind behaviour	A pattern of hurtful behaviour towards another child	Closely monitored and addressed directly with children
Bullying	Repeated, intentional behaviour causing physical or emotional harm	Formal anti-bullying response

Serious harmful behaviour	Violence, threats, sexual harassment, discriminatory abuse or other serious harm	Immediate response under Behaviour and/or Safeguarding procedures
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The distinction between bullying and other harmful behaviour does not determine whether action is taken. **All harmful behaviour is taken seriously.**

5. Forms of bullying

Bullying can take many forms, including:

Physical bullying

- hitting, kicking, pushing or deliberately hurting someone
- taking, damaging or hiding possessions
- threatening physical harm.

Verbal bullying

- repeated name-calling
- insults or humiliating comments
- threats
- deliberately mocking or ridiculing another person.

Social or relational bullying

- deliberately and repeatedly excluding someone
- encouraging others not to play or associate with someone
- spreading rumours
- manipulating friendships or deliberately isolating someone.

Cyberbullying

- harmful messages or comments
- deliberately sharing embarrassing or humiliating images
- creating or sharing material intended to ridicule another child
- excluding someone deliberately from online groups
- impersonating another person online
- using digital technology to threaten, intimidate or humiliate.

Bullying can occur through social media, messaging services, gaming platforms or other online spaces, including outside school hours.

6. Prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying

The school takes particularly seriously any bullying connected to prejudice or discrimination.

This may include bullying relating to:

- race, ethnicity or nationality
- religion or belief
- disability or special educational needs
- sex
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- appearance or perceived difference
- family circumstances or caring responsibilities.

Racist, religiously prejudiced, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, sexist or ableist language or behaviour will not be dismissed as "banter", even where a child says that no harm was intended.

Where an incident may constitute discrimination or a safeguarding concern, the school will follow the appropriate procedures and record the incident accordingly.

7. SEND, vulnerability and individual needs

Children with SEND or disabilities may be at increased risk of bullying. Some children may also experience or communicate social situations differently.

When responding to incidents, staff will consider individual needs, communication difficulties, disability, trauma and other relevant circumstances and make reasonable adjustments where appropriate.

Additional needs or dysregulation do not excuse harmful behaviour. Equally, behaviour arising from a child's additional needs will not automatically be defined as bullying.

Our response will seek both to protect children from harm and to understand and address the underlying needs of all children involved.

8. Bullying and safeguarding

Some incidents of bullying form part of wider **child-on-child abuse** and may present a safeguarding concern.

Where there is a safeguarding concern, staff must follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their deputy without delay.

This includes concerns involving:

- serious physical violence
- threats of serious harm
- sexual harassment or sexual violence
- discriminatory abuse
- coercion or exploitation
- harmful behaviour involving intimate images
- significant online abuse
- any situation in which a child may be at risk of significant harm.

The school will not wait for behaviour to meet the definition of "bullying" before taking safeguarding action.

9. Preventing bullying

Prevention is central to our approach.

We seek to create a school culture in which children feel that they belong, know how to treat others and are confident that adults will help them when they are worried.

Preventative strategies include:

- explicitly teaching respectful relationships and behaviour
- developing children's understanding of kindness, compassion, courage and responsibility
- PSHE and Relationships Education
- teaching children about online safety and responsible digital behaviour
- modelling respectful relationships through the behaviour of adults
- listening to pupil voice
- identifying children who may be vulnerable to social isolation or bullying
- supervision of areas and times where difficulties are more likely to arise
- addressing low-level unkindness promptly
- providing opportunities for children to develop friendships and a sense of belonging
- celebrating positive relationships and acts of kindness
- working with parents and carers.

10. Responsibilities

All adults in school

All adults are responsible for helping to maintain a safe and respectful environment. Staff should:

- model respectful and compassionate behaviour
- listen carefully to children
- take concerns seriously

- act promptly when harmful behaviour is witnessed or reported
- challenge discriminatory or derogatory language
- record concerns in accordance with school procedures
- inform the appropriate member of staff when further action is required
- follow safeguarding procedures where appropriate.

Children

Children are expected to:

- treat others with kindness and respect
- follow the school's behaviour expectations
- tell an adult when they or someone else is being harmed
- avoid joining in with, encouraging or sharing bullying behaviour
- support others who may be feeling vulnerable.

Children who witness bullying are not expected to put themselves at risk. They should seek help from an adult.

Parents and carers

Parents and carers are asked to:

- encourage children to treat others with kindness and respect
- listen to concerns and report them to school
- work in partnership with the school to resolve concerns
- avoid contacting or confronting other children or their families directly
- provide relevant information, including dates, locations and examples of incidents where possible
- support agreed strategies at home.

11. If a child is worried about bullying

Children are encouraged to:

- tell a trusted adult as soon as possible
- tell another adult if the first person they speak to is unable to help
- ask a friend to accompany them if this makes it easier
- tell an adult if they see another child being bullied
- keep any relevant messages or images if bullying has occurred online.

Children will never be told that they should simply "ignore" bullying.

They may be helped to develop confident and assertive responses where appropriate, but the responsibility for stopping bullying rests with the adults and children who are causing the harm, not with the child experiencing it.

12. Responding to concerns about bullying

When a concern is raised, staff will:

1. Make the child safe

Immediate steps will be taken where necessary to protect the child from further harm.

2. Listen

The child will be given an opportunity to explain what has happened. Staff will listen without making assumptions or promising absolute confidentiality.

3. Establish what has happened

The school will consider information from the children involved, witnesses, staff, parents and other relevant sources. Records, including digital evidence where appropriate, may also be considered.

4. Assess the concern

Staff will consider the frequency, intention, impact, context and seriousness of the behaviour and whether there are safeguarding, discriminatory or other relevant concerns.

5. Take appropriate action

Action will be proportionate to the circumstances and may include:

- restorative conversations
- support for relationships
- changes to seating, grouping or supervision
- increased monitoring
- pastoral support
- work with the child who has caused harm
- work with the wider peer group
- contact with parents or carers
- Reflection and restoration in accordance with the Behaviour Policy
- safeguarding action or referral where appropriate.

Restorative approaches will be used only where they are appropriate and safe. A child who has experienced bullying will never be required to participate in a restorative process.

6. Follow up

The school will check back with the child and monitor the situation after action has been taken. Further action will be taken if concerns continue.

13. Supporting children who experience bullying

Children who experience bullying will be offered appropriate support. This may include:

- a trusted adult to talk to
- regular check-ins
- help to rebuild confidence and friendships
- support with emotional wellbeing
- adjustments to routines, supervision or arrangements where appropriate
- involvement of the SENCO, pastoral staff or other professionals where needed.

The school will work with parents and carers to ensure that concerns are addressed and that the child feels safe.

14. Supporting children who have caused harm

We recognise that children who bully others may themselves need support.

Children who have caused harm will be helped to:

- understand the impact of their behaviour
- take responsibility for their actions
- understand the school's expectations
- develop more appropriate ways of managing relationships and conflict
- repair harm where this is appropriate
- make positive changes.

Support does not remove accountability. Where behaviour breaches the school's Behaviour Policy, appropriate consequences will be applied.

15. Online bullying and behaviour outside school

The school recognises that bullying can occur online and outside the school site.

Where behaviour outside school, including online behaviour, affects the safety, wellbeing or education of members of the school community, the school may take appropriate action in accordance with its Behaviour, Safeguarding and Online Safety policies.

Parents and carers should retain relevant messages, images or other evidence rather than deleting them if an online bullying concern is being investigated.

16. Recording and information sharing

Concerns about bullying and related harmful behaviour will be recorded using the school's agreed recording systems.

Records will include, where appropriate:

- the concern raised
- relevant information and evidence
- actions taken
- decisions made
- the rationale for those decisions
- outcomes and follow-up.

Records will be stored securely and handled in accordance with the school's safeguarding, data protection and information-sharing procedures.

Information will only be shared with those who need to know in order to safeguard children, respond appropriately to the concern or support those involved.

17. Confidentiality

Staff cannot promise children absolute confidentiality.

Children will be reassured that information will be shared sensitively and only with those who need to know in order to help them, keep them safe or resolve the concern.

Where a safeguarding concern is identified, information will be shared in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

Parents and carers will be informed where appropriate. The school cannot share confidential information about other children.

18. Bullying or harassment of staff

Bullying, harassment, intimidation or abuse of school staff is unacceptable, whether it is carried out by pupils, parents, carers or other members of the school community.

Concerns involving staff will be addressed through the appropriate Behaviour, Staff Code of Conduct, Complaints, HR and/or safeguarding procedures.

Staff should report concerns to the Headteacher or the appropriate senior member of staff. Where the concern involves the Headteacher or another senior member of staff, the school's established reporting and escalation procedures will be followed.

The school is committed to ensuring that staff are treated with dignity and respect and are supported when incidents occur.

19. Monitoring and review

The Headteacher and senior leaders will monitor bullying concerns to identify patterns, vulnerable groups, locations, times or behaviours that may require further action.

The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed through:

- analysis of recorded incidents
- pupil voice
- staff feedback
- parent and carer feedback where appropriate
- safeguarding and behaviour information
- consideration of equality and inclusion
- review of the effectiveness of actions taken.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier if there are significant changes to legislation, statutory guidance or school practice.

20. Related policies and guidance

This policy should be read alongside:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- SEND and Inclusion Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Acceptable Use of IT Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Attendance Policy.

The policy has regard to relevant Department for Education guidance, including **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026**, **Behaviour in schools** and **Preventing and tackling bullying**.