



ALDERLEY EDGE
SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Anti-Bullying Policy Whole School and EYFS

Regulation ISSR: Part 3, 10

Reviewed and updated by: Miss E Scott and Ms. L McConville

Approval: Full Governor Board

Last Review: Autumn 2025

Next Review: Summer 2026

This policy is to be read alongside:

- Child Protecting and Safeguarding Policy (Whole School)
- Behaviour Policy (Whole School)
- Online Safety Policy (Whole School)
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy (Whole School)
- Spiritual, Moral Social and Cultural Education Policy
- PSHE and RSE Policy

Statement of Intent

At Alderley Edge School for Girls, we are committed to ensuring that every student's wellbeing is a top priority, aligning with the principles of our Behaviour Policy and Safeguarding Policy. Our focus is on creating a supportive and inclusive environment where each student feels valued and safe, allowing them to thrive both academically and personally.

We promote a culture of respect and equality, and our school values reflect the importance of treating everyone with dignity, regardless of race, gender, sexuality, or ability. We work to celebrate diversity throughout our school community and ensure that every individual feels a sense of belonging. By fostering these values, we aim to prepare our pupils for the responsibilities of life beyond school, equipping them with the skills needed to navigate the world of work and further education.

Our school is dedicated to maintaining an atmosphere that discourages any behaviour that compromises these ideals, including bullying. We expect all students to play a part in preventing bullying by standing up against it and reporting any incidents they witness or experience. Should any form of bullying occur, students can be confident that it will be addressed swiftly and effectively. The school also recognizes its responsibility to respond to incidents of bullying that happen outside of the school grounds if they impact the wider school community, and we will take appropriate steps to address these situations.

Aims of this Policy

- To foster an atmosphere where bullying is discouraged and seen as inappropriate and wrong.
- To encourage pupils not to suffer in silence and to tell a member of staff about bullying which they have either experienced or witnessed, including promoting a culture of upstanding.
- To show that bullying will not be tolerated and that any incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way. We will help and support all pupils involved in a case of bullying.
- To encourage parents to report incidents to the school in the assurance that matters will be dealt with sensitively.
- To promote that all pupils have a right to enjoy learning and leisure time free from intimidation.
- To promote equality and address any prejudice to discourage prejudice-based bullying, including that based on the protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010.
- To understand the experiences and needs of those who are targets of bullying behaviour.

- To understand and address the needs of those displaying bullying behaviour through a framework of respect, support and resolution.

Objectives of this Policy

- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should understand what bullying is.
- All governors and teaching, and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a school we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- All members of the school community should know that bullying is not tolerated.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying behaviour is:

- Repeated
- Intentional
- Negative

Bullying behaviour is intended to make someone feel:

- Upset
- Uncomfortable
- Unsafe

In all types of bullying, the intention is to make the target unhappy and bullying may cause great distress. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them. Bullying is a form of child-on-child abuse and may result in safeguarding concerns.

Bullying is characterised by a power imbalance, where the person displaying the bullying behaviour holds dominance in the relationship, making it challenging for the victim to stand up for themselves. This power disparity can take many forms, including physical or emotional (such as understanding someone's vulnerabilities), stemming from differences in intellect, or arising from the ability to rally group support and socially isolate the target, whether in person or online.

Bullying is distinct in both its intensity and character from the usual ups and downs of everyday interactions. As students navigate friendships and develop relationships, conflicts and disagreements are a normal part of the process. Most young people can recover from these situations. However, it's crucial for them to communicate their feelings with adults who can guide them in building resilience and managing their relationships effectively. Students are encouraged to approach pastoral staff with minor disputes so that support and intervention can be provided early on, along with support from pastoral programs such as Girls on Board.

One-off incidents of unkind or hurtful behaviour may have a significant impact on the target and could be serious enough to be a criminal offence. Such child-on-child abuse is dealt with seriously under the Behaviour Policy.

There are many ways of classifying bullying. At AESG, we use the acronym (VIP) to help our students to remember the 'three prongs' (as directed by the Diana Award Anti-Bullying program).

Type of Bullying	Examples
Verbal Bullying	Name-calling or insulting Making racist, sexist, or homophobic remarks Mocking or teasing with the intent to hurt

	Threatening someone verbally Belittling someone's appearance, intelligence, or abilities Spreading malicious rumours verbally Public humiliation through verbal insults
Indirect Bullying	Name-calling or insulting Making racist, sexist, or homophobic remarks Mocking or teasing with the intent to hurt Threatening someone verbally Belittling someone's appearance, intelligence, or abilities Spreading malicious rumours verbally Public humiliation through verbal insults Cyberbullying (see below)
Physical Bullying	Hitting, kicking, or punching Pushing or shoving Tripping someone Stealing or damaging belongings Spitting on someone Intentionally blocking someone's path Making threatening gestures Physical intimidation or invading personal space

Cyberbullying

The rapid advancement of technology and its widespread availability have created new avenues for 'indirect' bullying, particularly in the form of cyberbullying, which can occur both inside and outside of school. Unlike traditional bullying, cyberbullying can take place at any hour, reaching a potentially larger audience as content can be easily shared. Bullying UK identifies several types of cyberbullying:

Harassment: Involves sending hurtful, rude, or abusive messages, such as offensive comments on social media posts, photos, or in chat rooms, as well as being disrespectful on gaming platforms.

Denigration: Occurs when false and harmful information about someone is shared, including embarrassing photos or spreading unfounded rumours and gossip.

Flaming: Characterised using extreme and offensive language to provoke heated arguments online, often with the intent of causing distress to others.

Doxing: the action or process of searching for and publishing private or identifying information about a particular individual on the internet, typically with malicious intent.

Impersonation: Involves hacking into someone's email or social media accounts to post or send malicious or embarrassing content, including the creation of fake profiles that can be difficult to shut down.

Outing and Trickery: Entails sharing someone's personal information without consent or deceiving them into revealing secrets, which can include private images and videos.

Cyber Stalking: Involves sending repeated threatening or intimidating messages, leading to fear for one's safety due to online harassment.

Exclusion: Refers to the intentional act of leaving someone out of group communications, such as chats, apps, or online games.

For further details on cyberbullying and advice on how to address it, you can visit:

<https://www.bullying.co.uk/cyberbullying/what-is-cyberbullying/>

The Education Act 2011 amended the power in the Education Act 1996 to provide that when an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, has been seized by a member of staff who has been formally authorised by the headteacher, that staff member can examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so. Safeguarding procedures regarding sexual imagery will be followed. Parental consent is not required to search through a young person's mobile phone.

Motivation for Bullying

While anyone can be a target of bullying, individuals with real or perceived differences in their identities are at a higher risk. Bullying driven by prejudice or discrimination stems from negative attitudes or beliefs related to the victim's actual or perceived identity. This form of prejudice goes beyond the protected characteristics outlined in the 2010 Equality Act, encompassing other aspects unique to a young person's identity. Such bullying is treated with utmost seriousness. Examples of prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying can be found in the table below:

Type of bullying	Definition	Examples
Racist bullying	Bullying that is based on prejudice or negative attitudes, beliefs or views about race, ethnicity, religion or culture	A pupil who receives lots of comments about their accent, clothes, the food they eat and their skin colour. A pupil who has to listen to several racist jokes.
Sexist bullying	Bullying based on sexist attitudes that when expressed demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. These attitudes are commonly based around the assumption that women are subordinate to men or are inferior.	A pupil who regularly subjects another pupil to derogatory comments about women on the bus.
Sexual bullying	Bullying behaviour that has a specific sexual dimension which may be physical, verbal or non-verbal/psychological. It may involve suggestive sexual comments or innuendo including offensive comments about sexual reputation, or using sexual language that is designed to subordinate, humiliate or intimidate.	A pupil who is being rated online about their sexual performance. A pupil who pings a girl's bra strap as they enter the playground each day after lunch.
Homophobic or biphobic bullying (sexual orientation)	Bullying that is based on prejudice or negative attitudes, beliefs or views about lesbian, gay or bisexual people.	A pupil repeatedly being called 'gay' by other pupils A pupil who reports that since they came out as gay, others in their class keep moving away from them every time they're in the changing rooms Ongoing name-calling and jokes about being 'greedy' because they are attracted to boys.
Transphobic bullying (gender identity)	Bullying based on prejudice or negative attitudes, views or beliefs about trans people	A pupil being teased and called trans because they wear 'girls' clothes' Pupils laughing and repeatedly telling another pupil 'that can't happen – your dad's a freak' when they are told that dad is now their mum
SEND bullying	Bullying linked to special educational needs or disabilities such as autism	A pupil who is taunted because they limp when they walk due to a spinal condition A pupil who is excluded from social groups because their classmates think they make odd comments.
Bullying about physical appearance or health conditions	Bullying linked to appearance or health conditions	A pupil with acne reports that a photo of their face has been uploaded next to a photo of a pizza and derogatory comments are being made in class and online. A pupil is called 'fatty', and 'piggy' and told they need to lose weight if they want a relationship.
Bullying related to home or other personal circumstances	Bullying of young carers, looked-after or previously looked-after children, matters connected to a parent or bullying based on comparative wealth/ difference or perceived differences in socio-economic status	A young carer is constantly teased about having to 'babysit' their mother rather than go out. Ongoing comments to an adopted child about being rejected and not having real parents.
Cyber bullying	Bullying that takes place online or through digital devices, such as mobile phones, tablets, or computers. It can include sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else.	A pupil receives threatening or hurtful messages via social media or messaging apps. A pupil has an embarrassing photo or video shared without their consent. A fake profile is created to impersonate a pupil and post offensive content.

Bullying and students with SEND

The school recognises that young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are significantly more likely to experience bullying, including online harassment, compared to their peers. Children with learning disabilities and autism are particularly vulnerable.

To address this, the school will implement reasonable adjustments to reduce disablist behaviour and name-calling, which are among the most common forms of disablist bullying. Research indicates that such bullying disproportionately affects students with learning and physical differences, impacting their well-being and academic success. Disablist bullying will be addressed as part of our broader discussions on discrimination and protected characteristics to help minimise these incidents.

The school also recognises that those pupils with SEND may view and/or respond to certain situations differently. In such circumstances the school will always consider if mitigating circumstances are pertinent regardless of whether the pupil was the perpetrator or victim of bullying.

In cases involving a pupil with SEND, there will be close collaboration between the pastoral team and the SENDCo to ensure that the student's specific needs are fully considered.

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that she is being bullied. Adults at school and home should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the school / public bus
- begs to be driven to school, refuses to get out of the car
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in schoolwork
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous and jumpy when a cyber message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated. Bullying is part of the adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) that any child can have that can lead to more complex needs as they grow up. By recognising it and tackling it immediately, we hope to reduce the barriers that a child may experience that can have a negative impact on their future life.

Procedures

School

- If bullying is seen or suspected by a member of staff, it may be dealt with initially and immediately by that member of staff. A note should always be made on CPOMS and the Deputy Head Pastoral (Senior School) and Head of Prep (Prep School and EYFS) should be informed. If a racial or other protected characteristic element is involved, the Head needs to be informed immediately.
- Where concern about bullying has been seen or reported, the incident will be recorded on the Anti-Bullying Log by the Deputy Head Pastoral (Senior School) and Head of Prep (Prep School and EYFS).
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
- The Deputy Head Pastoral/Head of Prep will interview all the parties where appropriate and make a record. They will determine the appropriate strategy and plan of action to combat the bullying.
- Head(s) of Year (Senior School) and class teachers (Prep School) are responsible for ensuring the implementation of the strategies.
- The Deputy Head Pastoral/Head of Prep are responsible for overseeing the implementation of the strategies.
- Parents may be informed and asked to come into a meeting to discuss the problem.
- If necessary and appropriate, the police will be consulted.
- An attempt will be made to understand why a pupil may use bullying behaviour and to support them to change their behaviour.
- Staff teaching/working with the pupils involved will be informed, as appropriate, if bullying behaviour is affecting a pupil.
- Punitive measures (spanning the full range of available sanctions including suspension and expulsion) may be used, as appropriate.

Pupils

Pupils are made aware that bullying is a group activity and if they are present they can make a real difference by taking positive action as an upstander. They are advised to:

- Question the bullying behaviour;
- Say something funny to redirect the conversation;
- Invite the person who is the target to go somewhere with them, away from the bullying behaviour;
- Intervene as a group to show there are several people who don't agree with the behaviour;
- Help the target of the bullying to tell an adult;
- Reach out privately to check in with the target to let them know that they do not agree with the bullying and that they care.

Pupils who become the target of bullying behaviour are given the following advice:

- Tell someone you trust such as a teacher, family member or friend;
- Keep a record of what is happening;
- Surround yourself with people who make you feel good;
- Don't blame yourself – it's not your fault;
- Be proud of who you are!

Pupils who are a target of bullying will:

- Be offered an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of staff of their choice;
- Be reassured that they are not to blame and have done the right thing in coming forward;
- Be reassured that the issue will be treated seriously and addressed sensitively and that they will be kept informed of progress;
- Be offered ongoing support in restoring self-esteem and confidence including specialist wellbeing support if appropriate.

Pupils who have displayed bullying behaviour will:

- Discuss what happened with a member of staff

- Discuss why they became involved
- Be helped to understand the wrongdoing and the need to change
- Given ongoing support, including specialist wellbeing support if appropriate, to deal with any underlying issues and to prevent any re-occurrence of the bullying behaviour

Outcomes

The following steps can be taken:

- The pupil(s) who used bullying behaviour may be asked to genuinely apologise
- Sanctions may be imposed, such as detention and exclusion from certain areas of school
- An official warning may be given to cease offending
- Suspension or even exclusion will be considered
- If possible, the pupils will be reconciled
- After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

Preventative Measures

The school employs a number of strategies to prevent bullying and to equip pupils to deal with incidents when it does occur:

- A positive school ethos is created by celebrating success in school e.g. in assemblies, noticeboards, etc.
- Equality and respect are given a high profile in school through the assemblies and house programme, in particular through pastoral-themed week(s) linked to protected characteristics.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and referred to as necessary.
- Information about bullying and advice about what to do if bullying happens is displayed around school and discussed with pupils during PSHE lessons and form time activities.
- PSHE sessions highlight the issues in the context of good behaviour and suggest appropriate ways of dealing with negative and unkind behaviour.
- Form time is given over to discussing bullying issues as well as it being part of the PSHE curriculum.
- Assemblies are used to ensure that the school policy is reinforced at regular intervals
- Anti-Bullying week is marked annually through a range of different activities.
- Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, a support group of students from all year groups in Prep, are trained by the Diana Award and receive general antibullying training. They give on-on-one support to students in need and play an active role in educating others about bullying. (Please note: at the writing of this policy, we are awaiting training for our Senior School pupils through the Diana Award)
- Anti-bullying issues are raised in subject areas through the curriculum including Drama, History, English etc.
- Pupils know they will be listened to and can raise awareness of issues through pupil bodies, committees (Senior School) and pupil voice meetings (Prep)
- Supervision of all areas at break and lunch time by staff is a priority
- External agencies provide talks through the PSHE curriculum

Staff

Staff can also experience bullying, and if they cannot resolve the issue informally, they are encouraged to discuss it with the Headmistress, their line manager, or another member of staff of their choice. The procedures for raising concerns about the behaviour of a colleague can be found in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. All issues will be investigated seriously, and ongoing support, including from specialist agencies, will be provided. For more information, please visit <https://www.gov.uk/workplace-bullying-and-harassment>.

Involvement of Parents

Parents should be aware that the school has a zero-tolerance policy towards bullying and actively educates students to prevent it. Parents of both victims and perpetrators of bullying will be engaged in finding solutions, with support from pastoral staff, and the Headmistress may also be involved. Parents will be informed about the policy and procedures, including the potential for permanent exclusion (i.e. expulsion) in cases of serious bullying incidents.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

All reported instances of bullying are recorded electronically, along with the actions taken and their outcomes. This electronic antibullying log enables the school to monitor patterns of bullying, allowing for preventative measures and an evaluation of current procedures. The log is reviewed on a regular basis by senior pastoral staff and the Safeguarding Governor, to analyse data, identify any possible trends and initiative actions in response where appropriate.

The Anti-Bullying Policy is reviewed annually to assess its implementation and effectiveness, ensuring that the school can adapt its approach in light of developments, such as advancements in technology. The opinions of pupils, parents, and staff are welcomed and considered during the annual review process.

The policy is actively promoted and implemented throughout the school. When appropriate, the school invests in specialised training for staff and utilises the expertise of antibullying organisations, such as the Diana Award.

Responsibilities

Governors will:

- The nominated 'Safeguarding Governor' will liaise with the Chair of Governors, the Headmistress, the Pastoral Deputy Head (Senior School) and the Head of Prep (Prep School) over all anti-bullying strategies and individual cases where appropriate.
- Discuss, review and endorse agreed strategies
- Discuss the Head's annual report on the working of the policy

The Head will:

- Ensure that all staff are trained and have an opportunity to discuss strategies
- Determine the strategies and procedures
- Discuss the development of strategies with SLT
- Ensure appropriate training is available
- Ensure procedures are brought to the attention of staff, parents and pupils
- Report annually to the governors

The Deputy Head Pastoral (Senior School) and Head of Prep (Pre School and EYFS) will:

- Be responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the policy and systems
- Ensure that positive strategies and procedures are in place to help both the targets of bullying and those using bullying behaviour
- Deal with incidents that are reported
- Keep the Head informed of incidents
- Arrange relevant staff training
- Determine how best to involve parents in the solution of individual problems
- Support and advise all other staff in dealing with bullying incidents
- Make regular reports to the Headmistress
- Complete termly analyses of the Anti-Bullying log to identify trends and themes
- Follow the Behaviour Policy if bullying occurs

Form teachers (Senior School) and class teachers (Prep School and EYFS) will:

- Be responsible for liaising with the Pastoral Lead and Head of Prep over all incidents involving pupils in their form
- Be involved in any agreed strategy to achieve a solution

All staff will:

- Know the policy and procedures
- Be observant
- Deal with incidents according to the policy
- Note any concerns on CPOMS as appropriate
- Never let incidents go unreported
- Promote the Anti-Bullying policy

Linked Policies

The Antibullying Policy should be read in conjunction with the Behaviour Policy and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Further Sources of Help and Advice:

At school, pupils can talk to:

- Diana Award Anti-Bullying Ambassadors
- Form Tutors
- Heads of Year
- School Nurse/ Mental Health Lead
- Student Wellbeing Counsellor
- Head of Prep
- Pastoral Deputy Head
- Any member of staff of their choice

External helplines:

Childline: 0800 1111 (7.30 am -3.30 am)

Samaritans: 116 123 (24 hours)

NSPCC: 0800 136 663 (Sexual harassment and abuse at school)

Text 'SHOUT' to 85258 (24 hours)

Websites:

- **The Diana Award:** Living legacy to Princess **Diana's** belief that young people have the power to change the world for the better. Involves a number of different projects aimed at reducing bullying in schools. One of the main projects is the Anti-Bullying Ambassadors programme which has trained over 24,000 young people across the UK to lead on anti-bullying campaigns in their schools. Website has plenty of advice on bullying for parents and young people. <https://www.antibullyingpro.com/support>
- **Bullying UK:** part of the 'Family Lives' charity. Comprehensive advice for parents and pupils including coverage of SEND, racist bullying and cyberbullying. <https://www.bullying.co.uk/>
- **Childline:** specific information for young people about different types of bullying including cyberbullying and racist bullying <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/>
- **Kidscape:** Charity established to prevent bullying and promote child protection providing advice for young people, professionals and parents about different types of bullying and how to tackle it. Parents Helpline (Mon-Fri, 10-4) 0845 1 205 204 or www.kidscape.org.uk
- **Just Like Us:** a charity to support young people belonging to the LGBTQ+ community. Runs a diversity week for schools. <https://www.justlikeus.org/>
- **Changing Faces:** a wealth of online support for issues (including bullying) relating to physical difference or disfigurement <https://www.changingfaces.org.uk/> 0300 012 0275
- **National Autistic Society:** specific guidance for parents about bullying and autism <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/bullying/bullying/parents>