



Poole High School

Anti-Bullying Policy

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Anti-Bullying Policy

1.0 Policy Purpose & Grounding

This policy reflects the legislation at the time that it was last reviewed. Any changes in legislation will take precedence over anything printed in this policy.

Poole High School believes all pupils are entitled to learn and achieve in a safe and supportive environment, free from all forms of bullying behaviour. This policy outlines how the school deals with bullying, including procedures to prevent it.

These procedures, such as learning about tolerance, empathy, and difference as part of the school's curriculum, aim to promote an inclusive, tolerant, and supportive ethos.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 sets out several legal obligations for the school's response to bullying. Under section 89, schools must have measures in place to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. These measures are part of the school's Behaviour for Learning Policy, which the school communicates to all pupils, staff, and parents.

All staff, parents, and pupils work together to prevent and reduce bullying at the school. The school has a zero-tolerance policy for bullying.

2.0 Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- Communications Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Education Act 2011
- DfE 'Preventing and tackling bullying'
- DfE 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education 2025'
- DCMS, DSIT, and UK Council for Internet Safety 'Sharing nudes and semi-nude: advice for education settings working with children and young people'
- DfE 'Searching, Screening and Confiscation: Advice for schools'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- MAT Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Relationships and Sex Education Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy



3.0 Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, “bullying” is defined as persistent behaviour by an individual or group with the intention of verbally, physically, or emotionally harming another person or group. Bullying is generally characterised by:

- Repetition: Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over an extended period of time.
- Intent: The perpetrator means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental.
- Targeting: Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.
- Power imbalance: Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations.

The definition used with students in school is: ‘When a person or group of people repeatedly harm another person or group on purpose. The relationship involves an imbalance of power, and it can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face to face or online’

Vulnerable pupils are more likely to be the targets of bullying due to the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves. Vulnerable pupils may include, but are not limited to:

- Pupils who are adopted.
- Pupils suffering from a health problem.
- Pupils with caring responsibilities.
- Pupils from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Pupils with certain characteristics are also more likely to be targets of bullying, including, but not limited to:

- Pupils who are LGBTQ+ or perceived to be LGBTQ+.
- Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) pupils.
- Pupils with SEND

4.0 Types of Bullying

Many kinds of behaviour can be considered bullying, and bullying can be related to almost anything. Teasing another pupil because of their appearance, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, home life, culture, or SEND are some of the types of bullying that can occur.

Bullying is carried out through the following mediums:

- Verbal
- Physical
- Emotional
- Online (cyberbullying)

Racist bullying: Bullying another person based on their ethnic background or skin colour. Racist bullying is a criminal offence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (as amended) and Public Order Act 1986.

Homophobic and bi-phobic bullying: Bullying another person because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

Transphobic bullying: Bullying based on another person’s gender identity or gender presentation, or for not conforming to dominant gender roles.

Sexist bullying: Bullying based on sexist attitudes expressed in a way to demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Sexist bullying may sometimes be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviours.



Sexual bullying: Bullying behaviour that has a physical, psychological, verbal or non-verbal sexual dimension or dynamic that subordinates, humiliates or intimidates another person. This is commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes.

Ableist bullying: Bullying behaviour that focuses on another person's disability or support needs; this can include mocking the individual's disability or their needs, using derogatory words or slurs in relation to an individual's disability, or deliberately excluding an individual because of their disability.

Prejudicial bullying: Bullying based on prejudices directed towards specific characteristics or experiences, e.g. religion or mental health issues.

Relational bullying: Bullying that primarily consists of excluding, isolating and ostracising someone – usually through verbal and emotional bullying.

Socioeconomic bullying: Bullying based on prejudices against the perceived social status of the victim, including, but not limited to, their economic status, their parents' occupations, their health or nutrition level, or the perceived "quality" of their clothing or belongings.

5.0 Roles and responsibilities

The governors are responsible for:

- Evaluating and reviewing this policy to ensure that it does not discriminate against any pupils on the basis of their protected characteristics background
- The overall implementation and monitoring of this policy.
- Ensuring that all governors are appropriately trained regarding safeguarding and child protection at induction.
- Ensuring that the school adopts a tolerant and open-minded policy towards difference.
- Ensuring the school is inclusive.
- Analysing any bullying data to establish patterns and reviewing this policy considering these.
- Ensuring the DSL and Anti-Bullying Champion has the appropriate status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the role.
- Appointing a safeguarding link governor who will work with the DSL to ensure the policies and practices relating to safeguarding, including the prevention of cyberbullying, are being implemented effectively.
- Ensuring that pupils are taught how to keep themselves and others safe, including online.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Reviewing and amending this policy, accounting for new legislation and government guidance, and using staff experience of dealing with bullying incidents in previous years to improve procedures.
- Keeping a record of all reported incidents, including which type of bullying has occurred, to allow for proper analysis of the data collected.
- Analysing the data in the bullying record at regular intervals to identify trends, so that appropriate measures to tackle them can be implemented.
- Arranging appropriate training for staff members.

The pastoral team are responsible for:

- Corresponding and meeting with parents where necessary.
- Providing a point of contact for pupils and parents when more serious bullying incidents occur.
- Providing follow-up support after bullying incidents.



- Investigating and following up on any reported incidents of bullying.
- Creating a safe and inclusive culture within their year groups.

All staff are responsible for:

- Being alert to social dynamics between students.
- Being available for pupils who wish to report bullying.
- Being alert to possible bullying situations, particularly exclusion from friendship groups, and informing the relevant pastoral staff of such observations.
- Refraining from stereotyping when dealing with bullying.
- Understanding the composition of pupil groups, showing sensitivity to those who have been the victims of bullying.
- Reporting any instances of bullying once they have been approached by a pupil for support.

Parents are responsible for:

- Informing the pastoral team if they have any concerns that their child is the victim of bullying or involved in bullying in any way.
- Being watchful of their child's behaviour, attitude and characteristics and informing the relevant staff members of any changes.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Using the reporting systems, which include the 'My Voice' button on the home screen that can be accessed on a school computer or from home, informing a member of staff if they witness bullying or are a victim of bullying or telling their parents, who in turn can use the contact form on our website.
- Not making counter-threats if they are victims of bullying.
- Walking away from dangerous situations and avoiding involving other pupils in incidents.
- Keeping evidence of cyberbullying and informing a member of staff should they fall victim to cyberbullying.

6.0 Statutory requirements

The school understands that, under the Equality Act 2010, it has a responsibility to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The school understands that, under the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998, it could face legal action if it allows pupils' rights to be breached by failing to take bullying seriously. The headteacher will ensure this policy complies with the HRA; they understand they cannot do this without fully involving teaching staff.

Although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, some types of harassment, threatening behaviour and/or communications may be considered criminal offences:

- Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to electronically communicate with another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or in a way which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or contains information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.



- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by means of a public electronic communications network, a message, or other matter, that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene, or menacing character. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information through any media, including internet sites.
- Other forms of bullying which are illegal and should be reported to the police include violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment, intimidation, and hate crimes.

7.0 Prevention

The school will clearly communicate a whole-school commitment to addressing bullying and maintain a clear set of values and standards that will be regularly promoted across the school.

All members of the school will be made aware of this policy and their responsibilities in relation to it. All staff members will receive training on identifying and dealing with the different types of bullying.

The curriculum will explore and discuss issues at age-appropriate stages such as: healthy and respectful relationships, boundaries and consent, stereotyping, prejudice and equality, body confidence and self-esteem, how to recognise abusive relationships and coercive control, harmful sexual behaviour, the concepts involved and why they are always unacceptable, and the laws relating to it.

Staff will encourage pupil cooperation and the development of interpersonal skills. The school will promote and celebrate diversity, difference, and respect for others. Opportunities to extend friendship groups and interactive skills will be provided through participation in special events, e.g. drama productions, sporting activities and cultural groups.

All pupils will have a designated form tutor, allowing pupils to discuss any bullying, whether they are victims or have witnessed an incident.

Before a new pupil joins the school, particularly when this happens in-year, the school will ensure they meet with a member of staff to plan their induction and identify any previous concerns regarding bullying.

The school will be alert to, and address, any mental health and wellbeing issues amongst pupils, as these can be a cause, or a result, of bullying behaviour.

The school will ensure potential perpetrators receive support as required and consider the motivation behind any bullying behaviour.

8.0 Signs of bullying

Staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a pupil is a victim of bullying:

- Being frightened to travel to or from school
- Unwillingness to attend school
- Repeated or persistent absence from school
- Becoming anxious or lacking confidence
- Saying that they feel ill repeatedly
- Decreased involvement in school work
- Leaving school with torn clothes or damaged possessions
- Missing possessions



- Missing dinner money
- Asking for extra money or stealing
- Cuts or bruises
- Lack of appetite
- Unwillingness to use the internet or mobile devices
- Lack of eye contact
- Becoming short-tempered
- Change in behaviour and attitude at home

Although the signs outlined above may not be due to bullying, they may be due to deeper social, emotional, or mental health issues, so they are still worth investigating. Staff will approach pupils who display a significant number of these signs to determine the underlying issues causing the behaviour.

Staff will be aware of the potential factors that may indicate a pupil is likely to exhibit bullying behaviours, including, but not limited to, the following:

- They have experienced mental health problems, which have led to them becoming more easily aggravated
- They have been the victim of abuse
- Their academic performance has started to fall, and they are showing signs of stress

If staff become aware of any factors that could lead to bullying behaviours, they will notify the pastoral team, who will investigate the matter and monitor the situation.

9.0 Staff principles

The school will ensure prevention is a prominent part of its anti-bullying vision and that an ethos of good behaviour is created, where pupils treat one another and school staff with respect because they know this is the right way to behave.

Staff will treat reports of bullying seriously and will not ignore signs of suspected bullying. Staff will act immediately when they become aware of a bullying incident. Staff will always challenge unpleasantness from one pupil towards another and will never ignore it.

Staff will always respect pupils' privacy and will not discuss specific instances of bullying with others unless the pupil has given consent or there is a safeguarding concern. If a member of staff believes a pupil is in danger, e.g. of being hurt, they will inform the DSL or appropriate year office immediately.

The school will provide follow-up support to both the victim and perpetrator after an incident to ensure the bullying has stopped.

10.0 Child-on-child abuse

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

To prevent child-on-child abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, the school will educate pupils about abuse, its forms, and the importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others through the curriculum, assemblies, personal development days and PSHE lessons, in line with the 'Prevention' section of this policy.

All staff will:



- Be aware that pupils of any age and gender are capable of abusing their peers.
- Be aware that abuse can occur inside and outside of school settings.
- Be aware of the scale of harassment or abuse, and that just because it is not being reported does not mean it is not happening.
- Take all instances of child-on-child abuse equally seriously regardless of the characteristics of the perpetrators or victims.
- Never tolerate abuse as “banter” or “part of growing up”, and never justify sexual harassment, e.g. as “boys being boys”, as this can foster a culture of unacceptable behaviours and one that risks normalising abuse.
- Be aware that child-on-child abuse can be manifested in many ways, including sexting, sexual harassment and assault, and hazing or initiation-type violence.
- Always challenge any harmful physical behaviour that is sexual in nature, such as inappropriate touching. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

Sexual harassment in particular can take many forms, including but not limited to:

- Telling sexual stories, making sexual remarks, or calling someone sexualised names.
- Sexual “jokes” or taunting.
- Deliberately brushing against someone.
- Displaying images or video of a sexual nature.
- Upskirting (this is a criminal offence).
- Online sexual harassment, e.g. creating or sharing sexual imagery, sexual comments on social media, or sexual coercion or threats.

Pupils will be made aware of how to raise concerns or make a report and how any reports will be handled – this includes the process for reporting concerns about friends or peers. If a pupil has been harmed, is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral may be made to children’s social care services (CSCS) and potentially the police, where the DSL deems this appropriate in the circumstances. Pupils should report any concerns to a member of the safeguarding team.

All staff will be aware and sensitive towards the fact that pupils may not be ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused. Pupils being abused may feel embarrassed, humiliated, scared, or threatened.

More information on the school’s approach to preventing and managing instances of child-on-child abuse can be found within the MAT Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

11.0 Cyber bullying

Cyberbullying can take many forms and can go even further than face-to-face bullying by invading personal space and home life and can target more than one person. It can also occur across age groups and target pupils, staff, and others, and may take place inside school, within the wider community, at home, or when travelling. It can sometimes draw bystanders into being accessories.

Cyberbullying can include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Threatening, intimidating, or upsetting text messages
- Threatening or embarrassing pictures and video clips
- Disclosure of private sexual photographs or videos with the intent to cause distress
- Silent or abusive phone calls
- Using the victim’s phone to harass others, to make them think the victim is responsible



- Threatening or bullying emails, possibly sent using a pseudonym or someone else's name
- Menacing or upsetting responses to someone in a chatroom
- Unpleasant messages sent via instant messaging
- Unpleasant or defamatory information posted to blogs, personal websites and social networking sites, e.g. Instagram

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to cyberbullying. The school views cyberbullying as seriously as any other form of bullying and will follow the sanctions set out in this policy if it becomes aware of any incidents.

Many of the signs of cyberbullying will be similar to those found in the 'Signs of bullying' section of this policy; however, staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a pupil is being cyberbullied:

- Avoiding use of the computer
- Becoming agitated when receiving calls or text messages

Staff will also be alert to the following signs which may indicate that a pupil is cyberbullying others:

- Avoiding using the computer or turning off the screen when someone is near
- Acting in a secretive manner when using the computer
- Spending excessive amounts of time on the computer
- Becoming upset or angry when the computer is taken away
- Concealing or attempting to use a smartphone

Staff should be aware that a cyberbullying incident may include features different from other forms of bullying, prompting a particular response. Significant differences may include the following:

- Possible extensive scale and scope – pupils may be bullied on multiple platforms and using multiple different methods that are made possible by virtue of the bullying taking place online
- The anytime and anywhere nature of cyberbullying – pupils may not have an escape from the torment when they are at home due to the bullying continuing through technology at all times
- The person being bullied might not know who the perpetrator is – it is easy for individuals to remain anonymous online and on social media, and pupils may be bullied by someone who is concealing their own identity
- The perpetrator might not realise that their actions are bullying – sometimes, the culture of social media, and the inability to see the impact that words are having on someone, may lead to pupils crossing boundaries without realising
- The victim of the bullying may have evidence of what has happened – pupils may have taken screenshots of bullying, or there may be a digital footprint that can identify the perpetrator

Staff and pupils will be instructed not to respond or retaliate to cyberbullying incidents. Staff should record evidence of the incident, e.g. by taking screenshots. Depending on the context, staff will report incidents to a member of the safeguarding team, the pastoral team, their line manager, or the headteacher for investigation and support. Pupils will be encouraged to report incidents of cyberbullying in person to a trusted member of staff. Pupils will be informed that, when reporting cyberbullying incidents, they should keep hold of the evidence, e.g. text messages, dates and times, and speak to the school. Contacting the police about the incident may also be appropriate. If there is a risk of immediate danger to them or someone else, they should do so straight away.

Where offensive content is posted online targeting a pupil, the person targeted will be encouraged to use the reporting mechanism on the website or social media platform to request its removal. If the school knows who posted it, it will ask them to remove it directly and follow safeguarding and behaviour strategies.



Under the Education Act 2011, the school has the right to examine and deal with any material found, as appropriate, e.g. involving the DSL or police as required. This power applies to all schools, and parental consent is not required to search a young person's mobile phone, provided there is good reason to do so. In these cases, the school's searching and confiscation procedures will be followed.

12.0 Procedures

Report bullying incidents to a member of staff. Staff must inform the pastoral team or DSL, as appropriate.

When investigating a bullying incident, the following procedures will be adopted:

- The victim, alleged perpetrator and witnesses are all interviewed separately
- If a pupil is injured, members of staff take the pupil immediately to the school medical team for a medical opinion on the extent of their injuries
- Where appropriate and available, other witnesses will be used.
- If appropriate, the alleged perpetrator, the victim and witnesses are asked to write down details of the incident; this may need prompting with questions from the member of staff to obtain the full picture
- The school will gather evidence of a cyberbullying incident; this may involve text messages, emails, photos, etc. provided by the victim and their family
- Premature assumptions are not made, as it is important not to be judgemental at this stage
- Members of staff listen carefully to all accounts, being nonconfrontational and not assigning blame until the investigation is completed
- All pupils involved are informed that they must not discuss the incident with other pupils
- Parents of the students involved will be informed of the incident, process, sanctions and/or follow-up
- The incident is recorded on the school MIS as a bullying incident
- Due to the potential for some specific forms of bullying to be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviour, staff members involved in dealing with the incident are required to consider whether there is a need for safeguarding processes to be implemented.

13.0 Sanctions

If the school is satisfied that bullying did take place, the perpetrator will be helped to understand the consequences of their actions and warned that there must be no further incidents. The school will inform the perpetrator of the type of sanction to be used in this instance, e.g. detentions, internal suspensions, suspension or in some cases permanent exclusion. They will also ensure that the student is aware of future sanctions if the bullying continues.

The school may use promise contracts to help students reflect on their behaviour and set clear parameters for consequences if the behaviour is repeated.

If possible, the school will attempt reconciliation; this may include an apology from the perpetrator. This will either be in writing to the victim and/or witnesses, if appropriate, or face-to-face. Discretion will be used here; victims will never feel pressured into a face-to-face meeting with the perpetrator.

Parents will be informed of bullying incidents, and staff will follow up to support the family.

All staff involved in managing bullying incidents will understand that disciplinary action and support or intervention are not mutually exclusive and should be done simultaneously to encourage more positive behaviour in future.

The school will avoid unnecessarily criminalising pupils for bullying or abusive behaviour where possible, as young people with criminal records face stigma and discrimination in future aspects of their lives. When handling



perpetrators, the school will focus on supporting them to develop more positive behaviours and refrain from abusive and bullying behaviours in the future.

The school informally monitors the pupils involved.

The school will remain cognisant that continued access to school can support rehabilitation from harmful behaviour and will not suspend pupils unless it is a last resort; where there have been serious or consistent incidents of bullying, the school will act in line with the Behaviour for Learning Policy.

14.0 Support

In the event of bullying, victims will be offered the following support:

- Emotional support and reassurance
- Reassurance that it was right to report the incident and that appropriate action will be taken
- Liaison with their parents to ensure a continuous dialogue of support
- Advice not to retaliate or reply, but to keep the evidence and show or give it to their parent or a member of staff
- Advice on aspects of online safety, in the event of cyberbullying, to prevent re-occurrence, including, where appropriate, discussion with their parents to evaluate their online habits and age-appropriate advice on how the perpetrator might be blocked online
- Where appropriate, discussion with their parent on whether police action is required (except in serious cases of child exploitation or abuse where the police may be contacted without discussion with parents)

The school will carefully consider in each instance of bullying that is handled whether it is appropriate to split up the victim(s) and perpetrator(s), e.g. preventing them from sharing classes or spaces where possible, and will split up other harmful group dynamics to prevent further occurrences where necessary.

Staff may work with the victim to build resilience, e.g. by offering emotional support.

The school will acknowledge that bullying may be an indication of underlying mental health issues. Perpetrators will be required to work with the pastoral team, where appropriate, to address any underlying mental health or emotional wellbeing issues.

15.0 Follow-up support or intervention

The pastoral team will monitor the progress of both the perpetrator and the victim. One-on-one sessions to discuss how the victim and perpetrator are progressing may be appropriate. If appropriate, we will arrange follow-up correspondence with parents after the incident.

Pupils who have been bullied will be offered continuous support. The victim will be encouraged to tell a trusted adult in school if bullying is repeated.

Pupils who have bullied others will be supported in the following ways:

- Receiving a consequence for their actions - this will escalate if the behaviour continues
- Being able to discuss what happened
- Being helped to reflect on why they became involved
- Being helped to understand what they did wrong and why they need to change their behaviour
- Appropriate assistance from parents



16.0 Bullying outside of school

Staff will remain aware that bullying can happen both in and outside of school and will ensure that they understand how to respond to reports of bullying that occurred outside school.

The headteacher has a specific statutory power to sanction pupils for poor behaviour outside of the school premises. Sections 90 and 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 give the headteacher the power to regulate pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises, and therefore, not under the lawful charge of a school staff member.

Teachers can sanction pupils for misbehaving outside school premises. This can include bullying incidents occurring anywhere off school premises, e.g. on school or public transport, outside local shops, or in a town or village centre.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and acted upon. In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying, members of staff can only sanction the pupil on school premises, or elsewhere when the pupil is under the lawful control of the member of staff, e.g. on a school trip.

The headteacher is responsible for determining whether it is appropriate to notify the police of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal in nature or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police will be informed.

17.0 Record keeping

The school will ensure robust and consistent records are kept of all reported incidents of bullying, including decisions made (e.g. sanctions, support, escalation, and resolutions). The headteacher and DSL will ensure that all decisions and actions recorded are reviewed on a regular basis for the purposes of:

- Identifying patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour on the part of certain pupils that may need to be handled, e.g. with pastoral support.
- Reflecting on whether cases could have been handled better and using these reflections to inform future practice.
- Considering whether there are wider cultural issues at play within the school, e.g. whether school culture facilitates discriminatory bullying by not adequately addressing instances and planning to mitigate this.
- Considering whether prevention strategies could be strengthened based on any patterns in the cases that arise.
- Responding to any complaints about how cases have been handled.

18.0 Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed every two years. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

19.0 Signposting

Information about how to report or gain support can be found on the Anti-Bullying page of our website, on posters in tutor rooms, and through our PSHE lessons, assemblies, or Personal Development Days.