



Anti-Bullying Policy

May 2026



Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually
Policy reviewed: May 2026 by ADT
Next review: May 2027 by ADT

This policy applies to all pupils at Wimbledon Common Preparatory School (“the school”) and should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- Acceptable Use Policies
- Staff code of conduct
- Learning for Life (PSHE) Policy
- Relationship Education (RSE) Policy

This policy reflects the DFE guidance:

- *Keeping Children Safe in Education*
- *Working together to safeguard children*
- *Preventing and tackling bullying*
- *Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff*

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The school takes a whole-school approach to the prevention, identification, response, support and monitoring of bullying. The school recognises that bullying can have a significant impact on pupils’ wellbeing, attendance, attainment and safeguarding, and is committed to early identification and effective intervention.

The school’s community is based upon kindness, inclusivity, and building positive relationships. The school is committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence, and any form of harassment so that every one of our pupils can develop to their full potential and flourish. The school expects pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed, but orderly, atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other, inside and outside school.

The school prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting the school in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that there are consistent expectations of behaviour both at school, online and at home, and that the school and parents co-operate closely together.

Bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, victimisation, prejudice-based bullying and discrimination towards pupils or staff will not be tolerated by the school. The school will treat all pupils and parents fairly and expects all members of the community to show respect towards one another. The school recognises its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and acknowledges that bullying may relate to protected characteristics, including race, religion or belief, sex, disability, gender reassignment or sexual orientation. All forms of bullying, including cyberbullying and discriminatory bullying, are unacceptable and will be recorded and addressed in accordance with the school’s Behaviour and Relationships Policy

This policy is available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils on our website and is communicated to all staff and pupils.

This policy applies to all pupils in the school including those in EYFS and where appropriate applies to actions undertaken both inside and outside of the school.

I DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Put another way, bullying is the intentional hurting, harming, or humiliating of another person. It may take many forms, including physical (including any threat of or use of violence of any kind), sexual (including the sharing of nudes/semi-nudes), verbal (including cyberbullying via text messages, email, social media, gaming, or other instant messages, and can include the use of images and video), and/or emotional (including by excluding, being sarcastic, name-calling, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). This could include allergy-related bullying e.g. teasing a child because of what they can or can't eat. It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone, or actions that fall short of direct participation, where someone encourages others to bully, or joins in laughing at a victim. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidating, and often involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator(s) and the victim(s) whether that be a physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), or intellectual imbalance, or by the perpetrator(s) having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate the victim(s).

Bullying can sometimes amount to child-on-child abuse, which is defined as abuse by one or more pupils against another pupil. It can be standalone or as part of wider abuse and can happen both inside and outside school, and online. Further information about child-on-child abuse, including the procedures to follow when an incident on child-on-child abuse is reported, can be found in the school's *Child protection and safeguarding policy*. Some forms of bullying, including sexual harassment, sexual violence, initiation/hazing behaviours, discriminatory bullying or harmful online behaviour, may constitute child-on-child abuse and will be treated as a safeguarding concern.

Bullying may be motivated by prejudice against particular groups and may involve actions or comments regarding a person's race, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities or certain health conditions, or because of a child's familial or financial circumstances. Bullying may be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. For example, bullying can still be homophobic if directed towards a child that is perceived to be gay, whether or not this is the case.

Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time and can involve anyone - pupils, children outside school, staff and parents.

The school recognises that unkind language, prejudice-based comments and so-called "banter" can create an unsafe culture if left unchallenged. Such behaviour will always be addressed appropriately, even where it does not meet the definition of bullying.

Where an incident of bullying causes or is likely to cause significant harm to a pupil, the school will follow the procedures set out in the school's *Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy*.

2 SPECIFIC TYPES OF BULLYING

Cyber Bullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for "virtual bullying", which can occur in or outside school. Cyber bullying is a different form of bullying which can happen at all times of day with a potentially bigger audience. The school's PSHE and computing schemes of work cover the ways in which pupils can remain safe online and avoid being a victim of cyber bullying. All staff have taken part in E-Safety training relating to topics such as grooming, avoidance of websites containing violent or adult content and dangers of sharing personal information and photographs. All children take part in E-safety workshops.

Definition

“Cyberbullying is the use of Information Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else.”

Department for Children Schools and Families

Cyberbullying can have a serious impact because of a number of factors including:

- Invasion of personal space
- The anonymity (at least initially) of the bully

The school recognises that bullying and harmful behaviour can occur online and outside school hours, including through social media, gaming and messaging platforms, and may still be addressed by the school where there is an impact on pupils' wellbeing, safety or school life.

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Cyber bullying – Preventative measures

The school:

- Expect all pupils and staff to adhere to its policy for the safe use of the Internet.
- Monitors all e-communications used on the school site or as part of school activities off-site
- Blocks certain sites through the internet filtering system and pupils' use is monitored.
- Teaches pupils about the risks of new communications technologies, the consequences of their misuse, and how to use them safely including personal rights.
- Prohibits pupils from bringing mobile phones into school.
- Requires staff to keep their mobile phones out of sight during the school day and switched to silent during lessons and when on duty. Staff may not use mobile phones to take photos or record the children.
- Requires that only school cameras are to be used when taking photographs of the children and that all images on school cameras are required to be downloaded (on to the school's network) and deleted once they are no longer needed.

Sexual violence and harassment

This can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or harassing a single child or group of children. It can happen in any setting, outside of the setting as well as online.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. Sexual violence in the context of this policy has the same meaning as those offences set out in the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Sexual harassment means unwanted conduct of sexual nature. Being a victim of sexual violence or harassment may adversely affect a child's educational attainment. Sexual violence and harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable.

Staff should:

- Make clear that sexual violence and harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up.
- Take all reports seriously and not tolerate or appear to dismiss sexual violence or harassment as “banter”. This might include telling sexual stories, making comments, taunting or jokes of a sexual nature.
- Challenge behaviours (which are potentially criminal in nature) such as grabbing bottoms and genitalia. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

- be aware that some groups are more risk: children with special educational needs and LGBT children.

If a child makes a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment, the matter is likely to be complex and require difficult decisions to be made, often quickly and under pressure. As with all safeguarding matters, it is important that the DSL is informed as soon as practicable.

When a child reports that they have been the subject of sexual harassment or violence, it is important that they are taken seriously and reassured that they will be supported and kept safe. They should not be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting the issue and should not be made to feel ashamed for making a report. It is important to recognise that how the school responds to concerns impacts on the confidence of others to report.

3 SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF BULLYING

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that s/he is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate further if a child:

- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic) (change in attendance)
- wishes to change their usual routine / route to school
- becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens to run away
- cries him/herself to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to underperform in schoolwork
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or “go missing”
- asks for money or starts stealing
- comes home hungry
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- complaints of symptoms such as stomach pains and headaches
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- changes in eating habits
- reluctance to use devices or distress after using devices
- unexplained friendship breakdowns
- is frightened to say what’s wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- starts swearing or using aggressive language for no apparent reason
- starts bed wetting
- choosing the company of adults

Although there may be other causes of some of the above symptoms, a repetition or combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers and reported / recorded, as appropriate, in accordance with this policy.

4 THE SCHOOL'S RESPONSE TO BULLYING

The school takes bullying seriously. It is not tolerated and any form of bullying does not align with the school's values. All incidents will be dealt with promptly, consistently and fairly. Bullying will never be dismissed as banter, teasing or a game. All concerns will be taken seriously and responded to in line with this policy. Staff will reassure pupils that they are being listened to and will be kept safe and supported.

Records relating to bullying concerns will be stored securely and treated as safeguarding records where appropriate, in accordance with the school's data protection and safeguarding procedures.

The school recognises that bullying can cause significant harm, including emotional and mental health difficulties, and in some cases self-harm, attendance concerns or suicidal thoughts. The school's first priority is to keep pupils safe. However, all forms of bullying, including emotional bullying, are taken seriously. Staff will use their professional judgement to respond appropriately, in line with this policy and the *Behaviour and Relationships Policy*.

Bullying itself is not a specific criminal offence. However, some behaviours may break the law, including harassment, assault, sexual violence, and sharing nude or semi-nude images. The school will work with other agencies, including the police and children's social care, where appropriate. All pupils have the right to feel safe and to be treated with respect.

The school recognises that some pupils, including those with SEND or certain health conditions, may be more vulnerable to bullying, including prejudice-based bullying or social isolation. Some pupils may also find it harder to report concerns. These factors will be taken into account when preventing and responding to bullying.

Pupils who experience bullying will be supported and helped to feel safe. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour will be dealt with in line with the behaviour policy. Where appropriate, they will also be supported to understand and change their behaviour.

Bullying that takes place outside school, including online or on school trips, will be taken seriously. The school may take action in line with the *behaviour and relationships policy* where there is a clear link to school or where pupils' safety or wellbeing is affected.

The school recognises the impact bullying can have on pupils' mental health and emotional wellbeing. Appropriate pastoral support will be provided for pupils affected by bullying behaviours.

Preventing bullying

The school's response to bullying does not start at the point at which a pupil has been bullied. Pupils are encouraged to report bullying when it has happened to them, or they have seen or suspect it is happening to someone else.

The school also takes the following preventative measures in order to create an environment that prevents bullying from becoming a problem at the school in the first place:

- Creating an ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat one another and the school staff with respect because they know that this is the right way to behave (see *Behaviour and relationships policy*)
- Having effective school leadership that promotes an open and honest anti-bullying ethos.
- Creating an inclusive environment where pupils can openly discuss the cause of their bullying, without fear of further bullying and discrimination.
- The school actively encourages pupils to share their feelings and concerns through pupil surveys, school council meetings, daily mood pot check-ins, class teacher check-ins, Zones of Regulations check-in and worry monsters.

- Pupil surveys include questions regarding feeling happy at school and having safe adults to speak to. Any concerns raised by individuals are followed up and trends are addressed in Learning for Life (PSHE) lessons, pastoral assemblies and/or circle time.
- Use of curriculum opportunities e.g. Learning for Life (PSHE) lessons, pastoral assemblies, drama, stories, theme weeks, discussion of differences between people to discuss issues around diversity and draw out anti-bullying messages including unkind behaviour online. This includes highlighting different allergies and intolerances.
- Using teaching methods which encourage co-operative work and a variety of groupings.
- Use of opportunities throughout the school calendar to raise awareness of the negative consequences of bullying, e.g. Extra-kindness (anti-bullying) week in November of each year, whole school pastoral assemblies, e-safety workshops.
- Establishing an atmosphere of open and honest support for one another.
- Improving the school environment, looking in particular at staff supervision patterns and timetabling.
- Raising awareness of staff through discussion in staff and year group meetings and specific training where required.
- Ensuring pupils understand the school's approach and are clear in the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders.
- Implementing disciplinary sanctions showing the consequences of bullying reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see bullying as unacceptable.
- Targeting our attention on key times and locations where bullying could be potentially more prevalent e.g. through the positive playground initiative. As part of the induction procedure, playground staff are made aware of anti-bullying issues. We have Playground Helpers who have instigated new games for children and who also monitor the Friendship Bench.
- Setting up social interaction groups where , e.g. ELSA intervention, Lego Therapy
- Displaying the contact details of the WCPS Safeguarding Team and Child Line for all pupils.
- Creating a positive ethos around the issue of anti-bullying through celebrating success.
- Involving parents to ensure that they are clear that the school does not tolerate bullying and are aware of the school's procedures in relation to dealing with incidences of bullying. This policy is available to parents on the school website. The school encourages close contact between the pupil's class teacher and parents/guardians and will always make contact where there are concerns about a pupil's wellbeing. If parents know or suspect that their child, or another child, is being bullied, they should contact the school without delay. All concerns will be taken seriously. Parent feedback is welcome and parent surveys include questions regarding pupils' wellbeing and behaviour.
- Staff provide good role models for the children, celebrating achievements, anticipating problems and providing support, ensuring children feel confident in talking about any problems they may have, knowing they will be listened to.
- The WCPS safeguarding team review data from Behaviour Logs, Bullying Logs and Secure Notes to understand trends in behaviour and risk areas.

Staff response to reported incidences of bullying:

The school ensures that all instances of or concerns about bullying and cyberbullying, both on and away from school premises are easy to report and that they are recorded properly. Records of instances of bullying and allegations of bullying will be kept on secure notes and on the bullying log to enable the school to identify patterns of behaviour and to evaluate the effectiveness of this anti-bullying policy.

The school recognises that pupils are likely to report bullying to someone they trust: this could be any

member of staff. The school also recognises that children may not find it easy to tell staff about bullying verbally and that instead they may show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice and react to. It is also recognised that an incident may come to a member of staff's attention through a report of a friend, or by overhearing conversations.

All staff are given appropriate training on safeguarding and pastoral concerns including child-on-child abuse, and how to respond to and record allegations of bullying at the school, including cyberbullying. Staff training includes drawing attention to the need to be alert to the signs of social ostracism following perceived wrongdoing (so-called 'cancel culture'). The school will ensure that all staff understand the principles of this policy.

The school has a strong and experienced pastoral team led by the deputy head (pastoral). All members of the pastoral team are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority, and alert to possible signs of bullying and will know when to apply the Child protection and safeguarding policy to bullying incidents including when to see external agency support and advice.

The pastoral team gives support and guidance to other staff in handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both the alleged victims and alleged perpetrators.

The trained ELSA and school counsellors are an important part of the pastoral support service, providing specialist input. On occasion, the deputy head (pastoral) may refer a pupil to the ELSA or the counsellor as appropriate.

Staff will always consider the motive behind bullying behaviour and whether it raises concerns for the welfare of the pupil listen attentively, not ask leading questions, and make a written record of the allegation to the best of their ability.

The school also recognises that the first disclosure to a safe adult may only be the first incident reported. It is not necessarily representative of a singular incident. Staff will take all reports seriously regardless of how long it has taken for the child to come forward. Staff will act immediately and will support the victim(s) when they raise concern.

The DSL (or deputy DSL) will be involved in cases where bullying raises safeguarding concerns, including where there is a risk of significant harm, child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment, discriminatory behaviour or ongoing emotional harm.

Process for investigating an allegation of bullying

When an incident of bullying is reported the following procedure will be adopted:

- i. The member of staff to whom the incident was reported, or who first discovers the situation, will reassure and support the pupil(s) involved, without promising absolute confidentiality.
- ii. The staff member receiving the report of or discovering the bullying will inform the headteacher about the bullying allegation as soon as possible. They will allocate an appropriate member of staff (the "lead teacher"), to investigate the matter.
- iii. Where an issue of pupil behaviour or bullying gives 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm', staff should follow the procedures set out in the school's *Child protection and safeguarding policy* rather than the procedure set out below.
- iv. The victim(s) and the alleged perpetrator(s) will be spoken to about the incident(s) by the lead teacher on their own (or, if appropriate, with a suitable person present for support) and asked for their account of events.
- v. Where the lead teacher considers that the reported bullying behaviour may be criminal or considers that there may be a risk of harm to someone, the lead teacher will report this to the head who will liaise with the DSL and inform the relevant external agencies as appropriate. The school will then follow the procedures set out in the *safeguarding policy* as well as any external agency advice.
- vi. The incident/s should be recorded by the lead teacher on the bullying log and secure notes, and relevant key staff will be informed.

- vii. A pupil's form teacher will monitor the pupils involved to offer support and to assist in managing and modifying behaviours as appropriate.
- viii. The school's *Behaviour and relationships policy* may also be invoked including the deployment of sanctions under that policy.
- ix. The parents/ guardians of all parties will be informed and may be invited into school to discuss the matter, and/or the sanctions imposed as appropriate. Parental support will be sought with respect to preventative measures, and any concerns of either party will be addressed.
- x. In serious cases, and only after the head has been informed, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police, or to Children's Services. However, in many cases it will be possible to resolve such issues internally under this policy and the school's *Behaviour and Relationships Policy*.

5 EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS) CHILDREN

Even the school's youngest children are encouraged to behave with kindness, respect and consideration towards others. They are supported in learning to care for their own belongings, respect the property of others, and value the differences and diversity within the school community. In the EYFS, staff help children to develop positive relationships and understand why some behaviours may be hurtful or unacceptable.

The school rarely needs to impose sanctions on children in Reception; however, privileges may occasionally be withdrawn in response to hurtful behaviour. In some cases, a child may be spoken to by the Head of EYFS, another senior teacher or the Head, who will explain why the behaviour was inappropriate and support the child in learning more positive responses. Parents are always informed when sanctions or reprimands are given and, where behaviour concerns are repeated, parents will be invited to meet with staff to agree appropriate strategies to support the child. This will be managed in accordance with the school's *Behaviour and Relationships Policy*.

In the EYFS, staff support children in developing personal, social and emotional skills, including kindness, sharing, turn-taking, empathy and positive relationships.

6 MONITORING

The school will record all incidents of reported bullying in accordance with this policy.

The headteacher, deputy head pastoral/DSL and dDSLs will review the bullying log half termly to help identify patterns of behaviour, so that the school can take appropriate steps to address trends in bullying behaviours within the school. Records of bullying incidents will also be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying procedures, and to highlight any necessary amendments.

This policy is updated annually.

7 COMPLAINTS

Parents are referred to the school's *Complaints Policy* (which is published on our website) if they have any concerns about the school's approach to a bullying incident involving their child.