



NETHER STOWE SCHOOL

Anti-Bullying Policy

Date: March 2024

To be Reviewed: September 2025

Everyone has the right to learn and work in an environment free from harassment or discrimination and where there is mutual respect and co-operation. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. If it does occur it will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Our aim is to eliminate bullying completely.

The school aims to work with staff, pupils and parents to create an inclusive school community where bullying is never tolerated and all its members are respected.

What is bullying?

The Anti-Bullying Alliance defines bullying as:

‘The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or through cyberspace’

Specific types of bullying can include (but is not limited to):

- bullying related to race, religion or culture;
- SEN or disabilities;
- appearance or health conditions;
- sexual orientation or gender
- bullying of young carers or looked after children or otherwise related to home circumstances;
- sexist or sexual bullying.

Bullying can take place between pupils, between pupils and staff, parents and staff or between staff; by individuals or groups; face-to-face, indirectly or using a range of cyber bullying methods.

Bullying behaviour can be:

- Physical – pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching etc.
- Verbal - name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling.
- Emotional – isolating others, tormenting, hiding books, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidating, excluding, manipulation and coercion.
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films etc.
- Online /cyber – posting on social media, sharing photos, sending nasty text messages, social exclusion
- Indirect – and can include the exploitation of individuals

Cyber Bulling occurs when information and communication technology is used deliberately to cause someone harm and distress. This is usually in the form of email, messages, phone calls and the misuse of social networking sites. Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence

in UK law, criminal and civil laws can apply in terms of, for example, harassment or threatening behaviour, and particularly relevant for cyberbullying – threatening and menacing communications:

- Protection from Harassment Act 1997, which has both criminal and civil provision
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Section 43 of the Telecommunications Act 1984
- Communications Act 2003
- Public Order Act 1986

The statutory framework

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 provides that maintained schools must have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. These measures should be part of the school's behaviour policy which must be communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents.

The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014

The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 provide that the proprietor of an Academy or other independent school ensures that bullying at the school is prevented in so far as reasonably practicable, by the drawing up and implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy

The Equality Act 2010

A key provision in The Equality Act 2010 is the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which came into force on 5 April 2011 and covers age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, 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.

Maintained schools and Academies are required to comply with the PSED.

In addition to the duties in relation to pupils with disabilities under the Equality Act, schools also have duties under Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 to ensure that pupils with

special educational needs engage in the activities of the school together with children who do not have special educational needs.

Safeguarding children and young people

When there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm' a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern under the Children Act 1989. Where this is the case, the school staff should discuss with the school's designated safeguarding lead and report their concerns to their local authority children's social care and work with them to take appropriate action. Full details can be found in Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

However, external support can be given to pupils whether or not it is deemed a child protection concern. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, the school may need to draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

Criminal law

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.

If school staff feel that an offence may have been committed, they should seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, any person who sends an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender, is guilty of an offence if their purpose in sending it was to cause distress or anxiety to the recipient.

Bullying which occurs outside school premises

School staff members have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises. Sections 90 and 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 say that a school's disciplinary powers can be used to address pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff, but only if it would be reasonable for the school to regulate pupils' behaviour in those circumstances.

This may include bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The headteacher should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

Implementation

All members of the Nether Stowe School community are responsible for developing a bullying free environment by following strategies to prevent bullying and ensure swift reporting if they think bullying is taking place.

Pupils and parents are encouraged to report bullying to any member of staff. Incidents are in the first instance referred to the pupil's Head of College or Pastoral Head.

Heads of College will investigate, take appropriate action and promptly inform parents using normal school policy and procedures.

Senior Leaders with responsibility for pastoral care will:

1. Monitor, review and evaluate the school's anti-bullying policy and procedures.
2. Report to the Senior Leadership Team the outcomes from monitoring exercises.
3. Arrange training and development work linked to the policy
4. Report to the Headteacher on the effectiveness of this policy.
5. Report outcomes of monitoring through the appropriate mechanisms
6. Maintain a log of any bullying incidents and report to the LA as appropriate. This is in addition to any incidents relating to protected characteristics as identified in the Disabilities Equality Policy.

Signs of Bullying

No single sign will indicate for certain that a child is being bullied, but watch out for:

- Belongings getting 'lost' or damaged
- Physical injuries, such as unexplained bruises
- Being afraid to go to school, being mysteriously 'ill' each morning, or skipping school
- A change in how they are doing at school, including a dip in grades or not handing homework in
- Asking for, or stealing, money (to give to whoever's bullying them)
- A change in behaviour, including being nervous, losing confidence, or becoming distressed and withdrawn
- A change in eating or sleeping habits
- Bullying others

Tackling Bullying

The aim of any anti-bullying intervention is to safeguard and support the victim, discipline and modify the behaviour of the bully with a view to prevent, de-escalate, and stop further incidents of harmful behaviour.

Senior and Pastoral staff are available to offer advice / support regarding bullying / harassment

issues to any member of staff or parent.

We evaluate our approach by surveys for all stakeholders, data collection (incidents are logged on a central information system), talking to parents, pupils, staff and Advocates.

We believe our work is effective because students report that they feel safe at school and that they know who to report bullying to should they be a victim or witness it.

Strategies for eliminating bullying

All staff should be committed to watching out and listening for incidents of bullying and dealing with any incident, however trivial or serious.

All staff must be aware and alert around school, keeping a watchful eye upon quiet corners and students who might be at risk. Teachers on duty will be aware of areas more likely to be frequented by bullies, (e.g. toilets, quiet corridors and unfrequented areas). Non-teaching staff must be made aware of whole school strategies to deal with any incidents involving negative language and actions towards students or other staff.

Students must realise that school will not condone bullying and that all reports of bullying will be acknowledged, acted upon and investigated. It is vital that students and parents feel empowered to report any concerns of bullying and are informed of how it will be investigated.

Tutors, teachers and support staff will look out for signs of stress, distress, deterioration in standard of work, conflict within friendship groups, absence from school, hanging around adults when in school, and any form of unusual behaviour.

All students will receive regular guidance on how they can easily access pastoral support to report bullying or discuss any friendship or relationship issues. Parents and families of children affected are updated about any concerns regarding friendships or e-safety.

Pastoral Support will provide mediation where appropriate.

Student voice will be regularly utilised to assess and evaluate the school policy to eliminate bullying to ensure pupils experience remains central to the strategic approach to the school.

Through the PSHE all students will be educated on the importance of tolerance and awareness of everyone's human rights. We will plan opportunities to reflect on the impact of local and global events on communities. We aim for our students and staff to value difference and diversity to prevent prejudice and discrimination within the school and wider communities.

Within PSHE, the wider tutor programme and assemblies, students will study friendships, e-safety, relationships and the impact of bullying and discrimination. Students will be taught the potential effect of 'banter', baiting and bullying to understand how their own actions may be interpreted by their peers.

Responding to Bullying

We investigate all allegations of bullying promptly and fully, obtaining evidential information from victim and witnesses

Parents/carers must be made aware of any concerns about bullying involving their son/daughter

All students must be encouraged to talk openly about incidents of bullying.

When a bully is identified, it is important for teachers not to over-react with excessive shouting and punishment, this may appear to reinforce the aggressive attitude which bullies themselves adopt.

Where possible a peer-orientated approach must be used (including peer mentoring and peer mediation) and each child involved should feel they have an advocate through the process.

If bullying is persistent, then this will be dealt by College Heads and Senior Staff and a suitable consequence will be agreed.

In some cases, a counselling session through use of the Student Support services with bully and victim together, with parents/carers also involved, may be successful.

Recording and Communication

Any reported forms of discrimination must be reported and kept on the information system and recording accordingly.

We will always aim to prioritise the safety of the child that has been harmed

All tutors / teachers must keep records of incidents of bullying and report these to the appropriate College or Pastoral Head

The College Head or Pastoral head must keep a record of bullying incidents, how incidents are dealt with, and the sanctions imposed.

Tutors, College Heads and Pastoral heads must monitor victims of bullying to check for reoccurrence. Any incidents must be communicated to parents and teachers so all become further aware of how to continue to monitor.

Parents

Parents / carers are encouraged to listen to their children, to read between the lines, to be aware of the possibility of bullying and to report to the school any fears or worries.

They should report to the school changes of mood, outbursts of temper, unexplained cuts, bruises or torn clothing and truanting or fear of coming to school.

Any concerns that parents / carers may have regarding bullying, must be reported immediately.

Parents / carers of bullies / victims should be kept informed and in serious cases, invited in to participate in counselling sessions.

Parents / carers are made aware of the anti-bullying policy when their children enter the school, which is located on the school site, and, thereafter, by reminders in newsletters periodically.

The school will continue to educate parents and families on the to keep their children safe when using the internet.