

Anti-bullying Policy

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Preface

The anti-bullying policy ensures that students learn in a supportive, caring, and safe environment, free from fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour that can have profound consequences, potentially leading to severe mental health issues or, in the worst cases, suicide.

Bullying affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Only by addressing all issues of bullying can students fully benefit from the opportunities available at the school.

This policy aligns with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2026), the Equality Act 2010, Working Together to Safeguard Children, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools and the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education statutory guidance (2026), and should be read in conjunction with the school's Safeguarding, Student Behaviour and Online Safety policies.

Purpose

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly, and safe environment where all students can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable, whether on school premises or elsewhere. If bullying occurs, students must feel empowered to report it, knowing incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Under the Children Act 1989, a bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.' In such cases, staff must report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who will refer them to the local authority children's social care.

This policy is linked to the school's **Student Behaviour Policy**, the **Disability, Discrimination and Accessibility Plan**, and the government guidance on tackling bullying:

[Preventing and Tackling Bullying](#).

What is Bullying?

The school defines bullying in accordance with the NSPCC as:

Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else. It includes name-calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening, or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere – at school, at home, or online. It is usually repeated over a long period of time and can harm a child physically or emotionally.

Bullying is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, including those with protected characteristics. Prejudice-based bullying, discriminatory behaviour, or microaggressions based on any protected characteristic must be challenged immediately. Staff must address incidents on the spot, in front of others, to make it clear that such behaviour is unacceptable. A record of the incident must be made.

Bullying can range from relatively minor one-off incidents to severe, ongoing concerns causing significant psychological or physical harm. All staff have a duty to challenge and report any incidence of bullying. Bullying may constitute child-on-child abuse and may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual violence, sexual harassment, discriminatory behaviour, online abuse, coercive behaviour, initiation or hazing-type violence and other harmful conduct. Such incidents will be managed in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Recognising Bullying

Students who are bullied may exhibit changes in behaviour, such as becoming withdrawn, anxious, or aggressive. Signs include:

- Reluctance to travel to or attend school.
- Declining academic performance.
- Unexplained injuries or damaged belongings.
- Fear of using the internet or mobile phones.
- Sudden behavioural changes, such as truancy, aggression, or self-isolation.

These signs could indicate other issues, but bullying must be considered and investigated.

Online Bullying

Definition:

Online bullying uses technology, such as social media or messaging platforms, to harass, threaten, or upset someone. It often extends beyond school hours, affecting home life and personal space. It may involve:

- Abusive or threatening messages.
- Posting derogatory or defamatory content.
- Sharing embarrassing images or videos.

Online bullying can affect both students and staff and may constitute a criminal offence under the Harassment Act 1997 or the Telecommunications Act 1984.

Online bullying may include the spread of harmful content such as misinformation, disinformation, and conspiracy theories. Online bullying may also involve anonymous messaging platforms, manipulated images, deepfakes, impersonation accounts, AI-generated content, exclusion from online communities, image-based abuse, or malicious sharing of digital content. The school follows DfE guidance on filtering, monitoring, and the safe use of emerging technologies including generative AI.

Prejudice-Based and Discriminatory Bullying

The school recognises that bullying may be motivated by prejudice or discrimination. This includes bullying related to:

- Race, ethnicity, nationality or culture
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Disability or special educational needs
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership (where applicable)

Such incidents will be recorded and monitored to identify patterns and trends.

Responding to Bullying

Bullying must be addressed immediately to protect victims and educate perpetrators.

1. Student Support

- Victims should be reassured that the matter is taken seriously and monitored closely.
- A Pastoral staff member or the Wellbeing Counsellor will provide ongoing support to help the student regain confidence.
- The Wellbeing Counsellor plays a key role in supporting students affected by bullying. In addition to one-to-one support, the counsellor is available to facilitate group counselling sessions that promote peer connection, emotional resilience, and restorative dialogue.
- These sessions provide a safe space for students to share experiences, rebuild confidence, and develop strategies for positive peer relationships.

2. Perpetrator Support

- A restorative conversation will help the student understand the impact of their actions.
- Sanctions, in line with the school's behaviour framework, will be applied to reinforce boundaries.

3. Staff Responsibilities

- All staff must challenge bullying on the spot unless there is a safeguarding concern requiring discreet handling.
- Make use of the Harms Test/Risk Assessment tool
 1. *Has the student been physically harmed?*
(e.g. injuries, threats, physical intimidation)
 2. *Has the student experienced emotional or psychological harm?*
(e.g. anxiety, fear, withdrawal, distress)
 3. *Is the student at risk of further harm, retaliation or escalation?*
(e.g. ongoing bullying, peer pressure, isolation)
 4. *Is the bullying linked to a protected characteristic or discrimination?*
(e.g. race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion)
 5. *Is the student unable or afraid to report the bullying themselves?*
(e.g. due to vulnerability, SEND, language barriers, fear of consequences)

Any positive/("YES") response requires prompt discussion with the DSL or DDSL
The DSL will determine whether the matter should be managed as a safeguarding concern, child-on-child abuse incident, behaviour matter, or a combination of these.
- Bullying should not be perceived as a child protection concern unless when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.
- Bullying disclosures should be dealt with in the same way as a safeguarding disclosure (see Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy).

- Incidents should be recorded on SharePoint and reported to the relevant Pastoral Director(s)/Deputy Headteacher Pastoral/DSL.

4. Parental Involvement

- Parents of both victims and perpetrators will be informed and involved in addressing the issue.
- The school ensures timely communication with families of both victims and perpetrators. Guidance is provided to help parents recognise signs of bullying and support their children. Where appropriate, restorative meetings or joint action plans may be used to rebuild trust and promote resolution.

Prevention and Education

The school prioritises prevention through:

- **PSHE/RSE Curriculum:** Students learn about the effects of bullying and develop resilience, empathy, and online safety awareness.
- **Assemblies and Workshops:** Raising awareness about the impact of bullying and fostering a culture of respect.
- **Student Voice:** Empowering student leaders to report concerns and contribute to anti-bullying initiatives.
- **Bystander Education**
As part of student induction, students are taught about the role of the bystander in preventing bullying. They learn how to safely intervene, support peers, and report concerns. This is reinforced through PSHE, assemblies, and student council.
- **Inclusive Practice**
Staff receive training on cultural competency, unconscious bias, and responding to prejudice-based bullying. The student induction, personal development programme, curriculum and assemblies promote respect for diversity and challenge discrimination, supporting an inclusive school culture, with a reactive response or intervention where necessary.
- **Staff Training:** Regular training ensures staff can identify, challenge, and address bullying effectively. This can include information and awareness of emerging forms of bullying, inclusivity training and reinforcing the importance of fostering strong, trusting relationships between staff and students to encourage disclosure of bullying.

Boarding Considerations

Guildhouse School recognises the unique risks for boarders who are being bullied and might find it difficult to escape their tormentors as they are not going home as day students do. This risk is mitigated at Guildhouse School because of the school's accommodation and the policy on its use and management by means of:

- Small, private flats with secure, hotel-style locks providing personal space and privacy.
- Flexible meal and activity arrangements, reducing unavoidable contact with others.

Boarders are able to report concerns at any time to boarding staff, safeguarding staff, the Independent Person or external agencies. Boarding staff receive training on recognising and

responding to bullying within residential environments. Records of concerns and outcomes are shared appropriately between academic, pastoral, safeguarding and boarding teams to ensure effective support. Students are provided information by means of their induction (School and Boarding) and school handbooks and ongoing education and awareness.

Vulnerable Students

Particular attention is given to students who may be more vulnerable to bullying or less able to report concerns, including students with SEND, international students, low language proficiency, students with mental health needs, and those with protected characteristics.

Bullying relating to a medical condition or allergy

The school recognises that students with allergies or medical conditions may be vulnerable to bullying, teasing, exclusion, intimidation or unsafe behaviour. Such behaviour will be treated seriously and may be managed as a safeguarding concern where a student's health or safety is placed at risk.

Reporting Bullying

Reports may be made by students, parents, staff, guardians, agents, peers or third parties. Anonymous reports will be taken seriously and investigated where sufficient information is available.

Cyberbullying of Staff

Staff experiencing online bullying from students or parents can report incidents confidentially. The Headteacher will investigate and may contact parents or authorities as appropriate. Staff are reminded to follow the **ICT Acceptable Use Policy** and avoid using personal contact details with students or parents.

Complaints from Parents

If a complaint is received from a parent or agent that a student is being bullied, the member of staff should immediately report it to the Deputy Headteacher Pastoral.

Key Contact Information

Students can report bullying to any trusted adult in person, via email at **concern@guildhouseschool.com**, or through Microsoft Teams.

Students who feel unable to speak to a member of staff may contact the school's **Independent Person**. The Independent Person is available to listen, advise, and support students confidentially, and can help raise concerns or guide them to appropriate services. Contact details are shared during induction and are available on noticeboards and in the student handbook.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Deputy Headteacher Pastoral/DSL. Feedback from staff, students, and parents will inform updates. Incident logs are regularly analysed to identify patterns and improve preventative measures. Incident logs are reviewed termly to identify trends by type,

location, year group, and protected characteristics. Anonymous surveys and student voice initiatives may help surface hidden harms. Findings inform staff CPD, curriculum planning, and pastoral interventions. The Deputy Headteacher Pastoral/DSL will provide anonymised bullying data, trend analysis and significant themes to the Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body at least annually. This enables leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of prevention strategies.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Further sources of information, other departmental advice, and guidance

Specialist organisations

The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) - founded in 2002 by NSPCC and National Children's Bureau, the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) brings together over 100 organisations into one network to develop and share good practice across the whole range of bullying issues.

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. They also offer specialist training and support for school staff, and assertiveness training for young people.

The Diana Award - anti-bullying Ambassadors programme to empower young people to take responsibility for changing the attitudes and behaviour of their peers towards bullying. It will achieve this by identifying, training and supporting school anti-bullying ambassadors.

The BIG Award - the Bullying Intervention Group (BIG) offer a national scheme and award for schools to tackle bullying effectively.

Restorative Justice Council - Includes best practice guidance for practitioners 2011.

External Guidance and Statutory References

This policy aligns with the statutory guidance outlined in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* and *Working Together to Safeguard Children* which require schools to have clear measures to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying.

Preventing and Tackling Bullying (DfE)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>

Cyberbullying: Advice

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62611456e90e07168ad2b1ea/Cyberbullying_Advice_for_Headteachers_and_School_Staff_121114.pdf

Cyberbullying: Advice for Parents and Carers

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a81638840f0b6230269709c/Advice_for_parents_on_cyberbullying.pdf

Online Safety Education

[Teaching Online Safety in Schools \[gov.uk\]](#)

Education for a Connected World Framework (UKCIS)

Framework outlining age-specific digital knowledge and skills. Useful for planning preventative education around online risks.

[Education for a Connected World \(PDF\)](#)

Appendix 2 – The HARMS Test Risk Assessment Tool

What is the HARMS Test?

The HARMS Test Risk Assessment is a safeguarding triage tool used to support staff in identifying and assessing incidents that may constitute bullying, child-on-child abuse, or a safeguarding concern. It supports professional decision-making by considering the nature, severity, frequency and impact of the behaviour on a student's physical and emotional wellbeing and helps determine when consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is required.

Steps for Staff to Apply the Harms Test:

1. **Has the student been physically harmed?**
(e.g. injuries, threats, physical intimidation)
2. **Has the student experienced emotional or psychological harm?**
(e.g. anxiety, fear, withdrawal, distress)
3. **Is the student at risk of further harm, retaliation or escalation?**
(e.g. ongoing bullying, peer pressure, isolation)
4. **Is the bullying linked to a protected characteristic or discrimination?**
(e.g. race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion)
5. **Is the student unable or afraid to report the bullying themselves?**
(e.g. due to vulnerability, SEND, language barriers, fear of consequences)

Any positive/("YES") response requires prompt discussion with the DSL or DDSL. The DSL will determine whether the matter should be managed as a safeguarding concern, child-on-child abuse incident, behaviour matter, or a combination of these.

Appendix 3– Behaviour and Bullying Incidents Log

Behaviour, Bullying and Discriminatory Incidents Log

Students Involved (Alleged Perpetrator/Target/Victim/Witnesses)	Age	Year	Date/Time/Location	Type of Incident: Behavioural/ Bullying/ Inappropriate or Discriminatory remark/Online misconduct/Other	Action/Sanction Taken/Follow-up & Support	Protected Characteristic Category (Y/N) If yes which Race Religion Disability Sex Sexual Orientation Gender reassignment Other	SEN/Learning Difficulty involved Y/N If yes, detail	Safeguarding Concern Identified? DSL informed?	Staff member recording (initials)	Outcome Resolution and follow-up completed? Parental Contact?

*Bullying logs and investigation into cases/forms are stored separately

Related Policies and Documents

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Student Behaviour Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSE) Policy
- Student/Boarding Handbook



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