ACHIEVE BEYOND SCHOOLS

"We R.A.I.S.E. each other"

Anti-bullying Policy

Independent School Standards: paragraphs 10 and 34

Latest review and update	September 2026
Next external review and update	September 2027

AIM

This anti-bullying policy sets out Achieve Beyond Schools, Stafford's approach and commitment to providing a nurturing, respectful and safe learning environment for all our pupils. We are committed to proactively preventing bullying and addressing it effectively whenever it occurs. We believe every pupil has the right to feel safe, respected, and valued within their learning environment, particularly our pupils, many of whom have experienced disrupted education, social exclusion, care experience, mental health challenges, neurodivergence or trauma.

Achieve Beyond Schools recognises the heightened risks of bullying in environments where pupils with diverse emotional and behavioural needs come together. Therefore, we adopt a proactive, whole-setting approach to preventing and responding to bullying — supporting not only the safety and wellbeing of pupils but also fostering the personal growth of all involved.

We view all forms of bullying as completely unacceptable — including physical, verbal, relational, online, and discriminatory abuse — and view bullying as a significant safeguarding concern. Acts of bullying will be responded to in line with our behaviour policy (as well as the specific guidance below). Our practice is underpinned by reflective, restorative, person-centred, and trauma-informed principles, ensuring that the dignity and wellbeing of all involved is upheld.
To achieve this, we support and encourage everybody to be respectful of each other and to report incidents of bullying that they either witness or experience themselves.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

We adopt the widely recognised definition of bullying as: "Behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally." *(DfE, "Preventing and Tackling Bullying", July 2017)*

Bullying is characterised by:

- **Deliberate intent** to cause harm or distress
- **Power imbalance** between perpetrator(s) and target(s)
- **Repetition** or potential for repeated behaviour over time

Forms of bullying may include:

- **Physical**: hitting, pushing, damaging belongings
- **Verbal**: name-calling, threats, offensive jokes or comments
- **Relational**: spreading rumours, social exclusion, manipulation
- **Online/Cyberbullying**: abusive messages, image sharing, trolling
- **Discriminatory**: bullying based on race, religion, disability, gender, sexuality, neurodivergence, care status, or other protected characteristics

We also recognise prejudiced-based bullying and peer-on-peer abuse, which may reflect broader systemic issues such as racism, sexism, homophobia, or ableism.

COUNTERING BULLYING

We believe the best way to address bullying is to prevent it before it starts. Our proactive approach includes:

1. Creating a safe culture

- Clear school expectations for respectful behaviour are co-created with pupils
- Daily routines and rituals foster predictability, safety and connection
- Reflective and restorative practices support relational repair, not punishment
- Adults model empathy, emotional regulation, and healthy boundaries
- Daily reference and teaching of our school values: **R**espect; **A**cceptance; **I**nclusion; **S**upport and **E**mpowerment (R.A.I.S.E.)

2. Trauma-informed environment

- Adults are trained in trauma awareness and de-escalation techniques
- Pupils are supported in recognising their triggers and helped with co and self-regulating their behaviours
- Emotional regulation and safety is prioritised alongside academic progress

3. Social and emotional learning (SEL)

- Regular sessions promote empathy, self-awareness, communication and conflict resolution
- Targeted interventions support emotional literacy, reflection and relational repair
- Pupils develop confidence in identifying and reporting unsafe behaviour

4. Digital safety and online conduct

- E-safety education is embedded into our PSHE education and computing curriculums
- Adults monitor and support appropriate online behaviour
- Clear procedures are in place for managing cyberbullying or harmful content
- Adhering to the schools' online safety policy, which actively considers the '4Cs' as outlined in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education': **c**ontent, **c**ontact, **c**onduct, and **c**ommerce, including teaching pupils about the misuse of technology, relevant legislation, and how to safely and appropriately use modern technology for positive purposes through
- Where applicable, managing electronic bullying (e.g. cyber-bullying) must also be considered alongside our online safety policy

5. Curriculum

- Bullying and staying safe is explored and taught throughout our PSHE education curriculum

6. Promoting equity and Inclusion

- We celebrate difference and challenge stigma through inclusive teaching and celebration of diversity
- Adults challenge language and behaviour that reinforces stereotypes or prejudice
- We pay particular attention to safeguarding pupils from marginalised groups who may face increased risk
- We pay regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 which include age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and marriage/civil partnership/pregnancy/maternity

MANAGEMENT OF BULLYING INCIDENTS

All reports or suspicions of bullying are taken seriously and responded to promptly, fairly, and with transparency.

1. Reporting and disclosure

- Pupils are encouraged to speak up through trusted adults
- Adults actively listen and reassure pupils that they will be taken seriously and kept safe
- Parents/guardians are involved where appropriate in line with safeguarding protocols

2. Initial response

- Immediate safety of the pupil(s) involved is prioritised
- The relevant adult records what has occurred and notifies the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) if necessary
- All bullying incidents are recorded securely using the schools' management information system (MIS)
- The DSL may follow up with further action if there is a significant safeguarding concern

3. Investigation

- An impartial investigation is conducted by an appropriate adult or the DSL
- All involved pupils are given the opportunity to share their perspectives in a supportive setting
- Witness accounts, adult observations, CCTV, and any digital evidence are considered

4. Outcomes and next steps

- A written summary of findings and next steps are recorded using the schools' pupil MIS
- Clear consequences and support plans are put in place based on the needs of pupils

- Parents/guardians are contacted for all involved
- Where harm has occurred, we prioritise reflective and restorative approaches to rebuild trust and understanding
- From time to time, we may involve the Safer Schools' Officer (SSO), police officers working in partnership with the schools

5. Support for the target

- Dedicated pastoral or therapeutic support is offered to the pupil who has experienced harm
- Regular check-ins ensure that emotional wellbeing is monitored and progress is reviewed
- Protective measures (e.g., timetable changes, trusted adults, supervised spaces) are put in place as needed
- Contact meetings arranged with parents/guardians

6. Support for the pupil who has harmed

- Behaviour is addressed, but not shamed; we work to understand the "why" behind the behaviour
- Reflective and restorative meetings are facilitated when appropriate
- Individual support is provided to address unmet needs, including SEMH or behavioural intervention
- Contact meetings arranged with parents/guardians

POST-INCIDENT MONITORING AND FOLLOW-UP

Bullying incidents are not considered "resolved" until long-term safety, repair, and reflection have occurred. We ensure:

- ongoing monitoring of relationships and group dynamics
- regular check-ins with all pupils involved
- incidents are recorded securely and analysed by leaders for patterns or repeat issues. This informs wider practice improvement and safeguarding strategies and gaps in provision
- adjustments to support plans if bullying behaviour continues or escalates
- our equality policy, with a particular focus on the protected characteristics (as identified in the Equality Act 2010), is also an important consideration in managing and analysing incidents of bullying.