



ED0008 - Anti-Bullying



Introduction

This policy has been written with regard to the non-statutory DfE advice *Preventing and Tackling Bullying* (July 2017) and *Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff* (2014). It should be read alongside the Equality Act 2010 and the statutory guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026* (KCSIE 2026), which comes into force on 1 September 2026 and emphasises the importance of tackling bullying (including cyberbullying). KCSIE 2026 highlights that children with SEND, and children who are LGBT or perceived to be LGBT, can be disproportionately impacted by bullying. It also stresses the importance of teaching children to stay safe online and ensuring they do not access inappropriate or harmful material. A key theme in the guidance is child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence) and, in particular, harmful sexual behaviour, sexual violence and sexual harassment. Child-on-child abuse includes bullying (including cyberbullying), physical abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment, the consensual and non-consensual sharing of self-generated intimate images and/or videos (including those generated using AI, e.g. deepfakes), causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, and initiation/hazing-type violence and rituals. The school's full approach to child-on-child abuse is set out in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

This policy should also be read alongside the statutory *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) guidance* (in force September 2026), the Behaviour Policy and the Online Safety Policy.

Defining Bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, *repeated over time*, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups – for example on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, sexual orientation (homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying), special educational needs or disability, or because a child is adopted, is a carer or has caring responsibilities. It may occur directly or through cyber-technology (social media, mobile phones, messaging apps, gaming platforms, photographs and email).

At Esland we use **STOP** to support the identification of bullying: **Several Times On Purpose**.

The various types of bullying can be:

Verbal bullying

- Name-calling or the use of written notes, emails, messaging apps or mobile phone messages, pictures or video clips (so-called 'cyberbullying'). This may include threats of physical violence, racist insults or threats, misogynistic or sexist abuse, sexual insults or threats, or other prejudice-based behaviour.

Physical bullying

- Deliberate jostling, bumping, pushing or shoving. It is a criminal offence if it involves assault, actual bodily harm or wounding, and may involve theft or damage to property accompanied by the threat of violence. Not all theft or damage is bullying, but it is where it is repeated and the intention is to create fear or to intimidate.

- Behaviour of a sexual nature – for example unwanted sexual touching or sexualised name-calling – is treated as **child-on-child sexual violence or sexual harassment**, not solely as bullying, and is responded to under the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy in line with KCSIE 2026 (Part five).

Indirect bullying

- Manipulating social networks to belittle, exclude or marginalise an individual from their friends and normal relationships – for example spreading rumours or making malicious accusations – which may involve cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying

- Repeated, intentional, harmful behaviour by one or more individuals using digital or online technologies – such as mobile phones, social media, messaging apps, email or gaming platforms – to hurt or upset someone. This includes the non-consensual creation or sharing of intimate images, including images generated or altered using artificial intelligence ('deepfakes' or AI 'nudification').

Challenging Inappropriate Behaviour

All staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviour between children. Bullying, harassment and abuse are **never** tolerated, minimised or dismissed as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', 'part of growing up' or 'boys being boys'. Downplaying such behaviour can create a culture of unacceptable behaviour, an unsafe environment and, in the worst cases, the normalisation of abuse. Reports are always taken seriously, and a child is never made to feel that they are creating a problem, or made to feel ashamed, for reporting.

Purpose

It is a basic right of all children and young people that they receive their education free from humiliation, harassment, oppression and abuse. Bullying may occur face to face or behind the scenes using mobile phones and computer devices. We have a responsibility to create and maintain a secure and safe environment so that parents and guardians can send their children to school confident that they will be protected from bullying and that action is taken to reduce the potential for it. We understand the seriousness of bullying in all its forms, and the psychological damage it can cause. In the same way, all adults in our schools have the right to work free from harassment, intimidation or abuse.

Scope

All staff should be aware that:

- all bullying, both actual and alleged, is important and must never be ignored;
- cyberbullying may occur both at school and off the school premises (see the Online Safety Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Positive Behaviour Policy);
- all bullying incidents must be recorded and the headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) informed immediately once the incident has been recorded, along with any action taken;
- students will be encouraged and helped to report bullying incidents, involving others as well as themselves;
- all staff and students have a responsibility to prevent and act on bullying;
- our first action is to stop the bullying, alongside appropriate accountability;
- the school takes a supportive and, where appropriate, restorative approach. Bullying and abuse are always challenged and never tolerated; both the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator are treated as children who may be in need of help and support, and a proportionate response balances support with appropriate accountability and, where necessary, sanctions.

Principles

All discovered bullying will be acted upon. Every person who is part of our schools has a responsibility to take action in accordance with this policy and the school's safeguarding policy.

The school aims to prevent bullying by delivering an anti-bullying programme through the curriculum. Educational elements such as PSHE and RSHE, Citizenship, projects, drama, stories, literature, and the discussion of difference and the importance of avoiding prejudice-based language are all used. Students are also taught how to deal with bullying, the part they can play in preventing it, and what to do if they find themselves as bystanders.

When dealing with students involved in bullying incidents the school's aims are to:

- support and counsel the child who has been harmed;
- correct the behaviour of those responsible and provide the necessary help and support, including in-school support and, where appropriate, help from external agencies such as children's social care.

Incidents are monitored regularly as part of the weekly behaviour and safeguarding meetings so that senior leaders, and specifically the DSL, have a clear picture of incidents across the school. Records on school systems are scrutinised to ensure any response is effective and sufficient, and the bullying log categorises incidents, especially where these relate to protected characteristics.

Implications for Students

Students need to understand what bullying is, along with its causes, effects and methods of prevention. Students must accept that they have a duty to themselves and others to prevent bullying and to take action should it occur. This may be direct – intervening in a bullying situation (the difficulties in this are acknowledged) – or indirect – reporting bullying or potential bullying to another adult, at home or in school.

Bullying is never right. If a student is being bullied, they should feel able to tell someone and get help. Students also have a vital role in prevention by drawing adults' attention to anything that, from their point of view, may create the opportunity for bullying. Students who tolerate bullying are supporting it; pressure from other students can stop bullying.

Implications for Teachers and all other Adults employed at School

All discovered bullying, including through the internet or other mobile communication, must be acted upon as soon as possible and be seen to be acted on. NOT TO ACT IS TO CONDONE.

The system of sanctions and rewards and the points system are the primary vehicles for dealing with bullying; staff must be familiar with and use these systems effectively. Incidents must always be carefully recorded on the school systems.

The child who has been harmed and the child responsible must be seen by a senior member of staff and their comments carefully recorded; the DSL must be involved as necessary. All staff working with the young people involved should be informed, including social workers where there is current local authority involvement.

Danger periods are breaks, lunchtimes and the start and finish of lessons; a conscientious exercise of professional duties minimises the opportunities available. Staff must be aware that their own conduct is often reflected in the way children behave; if bullying strategies are used by staff this reinforces the idea that bullying is a legitimate way of exercising power and control. Teaching about bullying through the curriculum is an essential prevention strategy, and staff maintain a consistent anti-bullying stance.

Staff are made aware of bullying through a module delivered at induction and through ongoing training that includes the content of this policy, legal responsibilities, actions to resolve and prevent problems, and the sources of support available.

Where appropriate, schools invest in specialised skills to understand the needs of our students, including those with SEND and LGBT students.

Allegations of bullying, harassment or abuse against any adult – including supply teachers, trainee teachers, volunteers and contractors – are managed under the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. The headteacher will consider whether a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is appropriate, in line with KCSIE 2026.

Implications for Staff

Staff have a key role in the prevention and identification of bullying and can help identify early signs of possible bullying manifesting in abnormal behaviour patterns such as:

- an unwillingness to attend school;
- a pattern of vague headaches or stomach aches;
- moodiness or changes in mood;
- requests for extra money;
- equipment going missing;
- signs of self-harm or a decline in mental health.

If staff think a child is being bullied or is bullying, they should contact a member of the senior leadership team immediately – there is always someone available. Staff recognise that a mental health problem can, in some cases, be a safeguarding concern (for example self-harm, an eating disorder or suicidal ideation) and will report any such concern to the DSL. Where a child is at immediate risk of significant harm, staff will call 999 or take the child to A&E (or call 111 if it is not an emergency) and inform the DSL immediately.

If the problem occurs only outside school, the school will still offer help and support, and it may be necessary to contact children's social care and/or the police. Where concerns are raised about bullying and radicalisation, the DSL/headteacher must be informed and will report to the police. A child should not be encouraged to hit back, although they may need to defend themselves if physically attacked.

Staff Modelling and Expectations

All staff have a role in creating a climate and attitude that does not sustain bullying, mainly by valuing others and treating everyone – their property and the school – with respect. The school actively promotes the values of tolerance, understanding and support for children of different cultures, faiths and backgrounds. Examples of good practice include ensuring notices around the school are polite and positive, and staff treating each other and students with consideration. For senior and middle managers, particular responsibilities include ensuring coherent curriculum content on bullying; making policies, practices and consequences clear to staff; evaluating policies, structures and practices; supporting all staff in dealing with bullying; and facilitating staff training and development.

The DSL will review all reports of bullying within 24 hours and liaise with parents/carers and relevant professionals. This includes a risk assessment for all young people involved to ensure their safety and wellbeing during an investigation. Parents and carers are kept informed throughout. The DSL and headteacher (if not the DSL) refer to the school's Positive Behaviour Policy when deciding how to respond to proven incidents of bullying.

Procedure

Prevention

- Raise awareness of the school's position against bullying with all students.
- Foster an atmosphere in which students feel comfortable seeking help and know how to do so.
- Make students aware of strategies for coping with bullying.
- Minimise the occurrence of situations in the day that make bullying likely.
- Provide positive reinforcement of good behaviour, both formally and informally.

Dealing with Bullying

Aim: to support and counsel the child who has been harmed and to correct the behaviour of those responsible, via a prompt but considered response to incidents and the collation of relevant information. Rewards and sanctions are applied in line with the Positive Behaviour Policy.

Praise and encouragement: highlight positive behaviour, set achievable goals, and acknowledge positive actions in assemblies and through the points system and Good News.

Sanctions: applied only with a view to improving the behaviour of those responsible and demonstrating the school's commitment to this policy. Immediate responses may include a meeting with the headteacher, an apology to the child harmed, loss of privileges or points not earned, and – in serious cases – suspension.

If bullying occurs, it is recorded on CPOMS and becomes an incident on the system; victim and action statements are printed monthly for inclusion in a paper file. Responses may include an individual behaviour contract or restorative work and further loss of privileges. If there is no improvement, the Positive Behaviour Policy is followed – a series of suspensions, then, as a last resort, permanent exclusion – alongside an evaluation of needs and risks and referral to children's social care.

Definitions

There are a number of definitions of bullying, however in the latest School Standards a working definition of bullying is; *"that it intentionally hurts another student or group physically or emotionally and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability, or because a child is adopted or is a carer – it may occur directly or through cyber-technology (social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email)"*

Bullying can take many forms but three main types are:

- physical- hitting, kicking, taking belongings
- verbal-name calling, insulting, racist remarks, homophobic remarks, sexist remarks or any other comment which isolates a person in relation to their appearance, persona, beliefs or background.
- indirect – spreading nasty stories about someone, excluding someone from social groups

Prejudice-based Bullying

Prejudice-based bullying is bullying based on a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

The school takes a zero-tolerance approach to sexism, misogyny, sexual harassment, racism and other prejudiced or derogatory behaviour, and delivers preventative education through PSHE and RSHE. Where a child's culture, race or any other protected characteristic may be a factor in an incident, staff refer to the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, the Positive Behaviour Policy and KCSIE 2026.

Cyber Bullying (Online Bullying)

The school recognises that cyberbullying is an increasingly common and serious phenomenon. Cyberbullying can happen at any time of day, outside school grounds and in places previously regarded as safe, such as the home. The audience for electronically circulated messages can be large and hard to control, and because the bully and the person bullied may never be in the same physical space, cyberbullying can appear anonymous. It can take place between people of different ages and generations, and being a bystander can make someone an accessory, although this is sometimes unintentional. Cyberbullying can involve the malicious use of mobile phones, messaging apps, chat rooms and message boards, video-hosting and streaming sites, social networking sites, webcams, virtual learning environments (VLEs), and gaming sites, consoles and virtual worlds. It potentially falls foul of a number of laws, including those concerning harassment, threatening behaviour and defamation. The headteacher has powers under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to regulate reasonably the conduct of students when off-site and to confiscate items such as mobile phones for a limited period.

In line with KCSIE 2026, the school reviews the effectiveness of its filtering and monitoring systems at least once every academic year, and operates as a mobile phone-free environment by default. The school is alert to online harms including the non-consensual creation or sharing of self-generated intimate images and/or videos, including images generated or altered using artificial intelligence (for example 'deepfakes' and AI 'nudification'), and responds to these as child-on-child abuse.

Serious Violence and Weapons

Bullying can occur in the context of peer conflict and serious violence. Any concern that a child is carrying or using a weapon, or has expressed an intention to do so, must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy) without delay. The DSL will assess the risk to the individual child and to others, put in place a safety and support plan where needed, and take action to de-escalate peer conflict. Where appropriate, the DSL will make referrals to children's social care and/or the police.

What the school will do

The school is proactive in preventing cyberbullying through the inclusion of the topic in PSHE and RSHE for each year group, its Student Acceptable Use Agreement for ICT, its monitoring of ICT use, and its internet-safety awareness programme. Students are encouraged to report anything that concerns them. Because the available technologies change constantly, the school's provision to prevent cyberbullying is reviewed annually. All incidents of cyberbullying are evaluated and carefully recorded, with evidence retained; advice is sought from children's social care and followed.

On receiving a report of cyberbullying, in or outside school, the school will:

- reassure the person making the disclosure that the issue will be investigated with discretion;
- advise on how to prevent further instances and how to keep the relevant evidence;
- evaluate the allegation, collecting as much information as possible;
- take action to prevent further circulation of the material – for example, where the person responsible is a student, the relevant member of SLT will supervise the immediate removal of content, and the school will signpost tools such as Report Remove (IWF/Childline) for the removal of intimate images.

When the person responsible has been identified, and depending on the severity, the school may (first incident) arrange for them to be seen by their form tutor and an SLT member to ensure they understand the seriousness and impact of their actions, followed by proportionate action such as a verbal warning, limited internet access, restrictions on mobile phone use, detention or suspension. In more serious cases the school may contact the parents of both children, contact the host site or phone company, and confiscate devices used to cyberbully.

In most cases matters are dealt with internally, but in serious cases where there are concerns about the welfare of any student, the school will refer to children's social care and/or the police where an offence is thought to have been committed – for example where there is evidence of a serious criminal offence (including radicalisation); where a child has suffered or is at risk of serious harm, including self-harm; where there is evidence or suspicion of adult involvement; where a group of students, including from another school, may be involved; or where any child involved is subject to a Child Protection Plan.

Appeals for Bullying Incidents

At all times the school seeks to work with parents and students to ensure that incidents of bullying are dealt with to the satisfaction of all concerned. If agreement cannot be reached, the matter may be dealt with through the formal complaints procedure detailed on the website.

Monitoring Arrangements

The Education Director reviews this policy every year and assesses its implementation and effectiveness through positive action based on incident reports and ongoing feedback from staff and pupils. The policy is promoted and implemented

throughout the school, and training is given to staff as part of their induction to ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities and how to implement them.

Equal Opportunities

Diversity of cultures is represented in the books, display materials and equipment used within the school. Activities are organised to give pupils the opportunity to share in, respect and appreciate a wide range of cultures. Each child's culture is recognised and treated with respect across the curriculum, and where possible children are given the opportunity to share experiences and knowledge in order to raise self-esteem. If a child's culture or race may be a factor in an occurrence of bullying, staff refer to the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, the Positive Behaviour Policy and KCSIE 2026.

Useful Links

Supporting organisations

- Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- Childline: www.childline.org.uk
- Family Lives: www.familylives.org.uk
- Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk
- MindEd: www.minded.org.uk
- NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk
- The BIG Award: www.bullyinginterventiongroup.co.uk/index.php
- PSHE Association: www.pshe-association.org.uk
- Restorative Justice Council: www.restorativejustice.org.uk
- The Diana Award: www.diana-award.org.uk
- Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk
- Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk
- Young Carers: <https://carers.org/about-us/about-young-carers>
- The Restorative Justice Council: <https://restorativejustice.org.uk/restorative-practice-schools>

SEND

- Changing Faces: www.changingfaces.org.uk
- Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk
- DfE: SEND code of practice: www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to25

Cyberbullying

- Childnet: www.childnet.com
- Internet Watch Foundation: www.iwf.org.uk
- Think U Know: www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk
- The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-council-for-child-internet-safety-ukccis
- DfE 'Cyberbullying: advice for headteacher/principals and school/college staff': www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying
- DfE 'Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying': www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying

Race, religion and nationality

- Anne Frank Trust: www.annefrank.org.uk
- Kick it Out: <https://www.kickitout.org/take-action/resources>
- Report it: www.report-it.org.uk
- Tell Mama: www.tellmamauk.org
- Educate against Hate: www.educateagainsthate.com
- Show Racism the Red Card: <http://www.theredcard.org/>

LGBT

- Barnardo's LGBT Hub: www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/our_work/lgbtq.htm

- Metro Charity: www.metrocentreonline.org
- EACH: www.eachaction.org.uk
- Proud Trust: www.theproudtrust.org
- School/colleges Out: <http://www.schools-out.org.uk/>

Sexual harassment and sexual bullying

- Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAW) www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk
- Disrespect No Body: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disrespect-nobodycampaign-posters>
- Anti-bullying Alliance: advice for school/college staff and professionals about developing effective anti-bullying practice in relation to sexual bullying: <https://antibullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-about-bullying/sexual-and-sexist-bullying>

Note: Additional links can be found in 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (July 2017)

www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying

DfE research into anti-bullying practices:

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

Policy Review

The below changes were made on 09/07/2026

Section	Change made	KCSIE 2026 basis
Throughout	Updated statutory reference to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (in force 1 September 2026).	KCSIE 2026 replaces the 2025 version.
Throughout	"Peer-on-peer abuse" replaced with "child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence)".	KCSIE 2026 retitles the section to include harassment and violence.
Introduction / Cyberbullying	"Sexting" replaced with "self-generated intimate images and/or videos, including those generated using AI (e.g. deepfakes)"; AI 'nudification' named as an online harm.	Updated KCSIE 2026 terminology on nude imagery and AI-generated abuse material.
Defining Bullying	Definition re-worded to the standard DfE construction; sexual orientation / homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying made explicit.	Aligns wording with DfE definition and KCSIE 2026 equalities framing.
Challenging behaviour (new)	New statement that bullying, harassment and abuse are never dismissed as 'banter', 'having a laugh', 'part of growing up' or 'boys being boys'.	Reflects KCSIE 2026 duty to challenge inappropriate behaviour.
Scope / approach	"No blame approach" reframed as a supportive and restorative approach that keeps support for both children while making accountability and sanctions clear. (Please review – see note.)	Aligns with KCSIE 2026 expectation that abuse is always challenged, not treated as 'no blame'.
Serious violence (new)	New section on weapons and peer conflict: concerns reported to the DSL, who assesses risk, puts in place a safety and support plan and de-escalates.	New KCSIE 2026 serious-violence provisions.
Sexual behaviour	Unwanted sexual touching / sexualised name-calling flagged as child-on-child sexual violence or harassment, handled under the Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy.	KCSIE 2026 Part 5; harmful sexual behaviour continuum.
Mental health	Added that a mental health problem can be a safeguarding concern, and the 999 / A&E / 111 escalation route for immediate risk.	KCSIE 2026 mental-health-as-safeguarding provisions.
Cyberbullying	Added annual review of filtering and monitoring effectiveness, and mobile phone-free-by-default position.	KCSIE 2026 filtering & monitoring and mobile phones provisions.

Section	Change made	KCSIE 2026 basis
Prejudice-based bullying	Added explicit zero-tolerance statement covering sexism, misogyny, sexual harassment and racism, delivered through PSHE and RSHE.	KCSIE 2026 references to misogyny and preventative education.
Adults / allegations	Added that allegations against any adult – including supply teachers, trainee teachers, volunteers and contractors – are managed under the safeguarding policy, with LADO referral considered.	KCSIE 2026 names trainee teachers; LADO referral expectation.
Linked policies / guidance	Added references to the RSHE statutory guidance (September 2026), Positive Behaviour Policy and Online Safety Policy.	Cross-guidance alignment for September 2026.