

The Gryphon School

Anti-Bullying Policy 2025



“Bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals. It can be a barrier to their learning and have serious consequences for their mental health. Bullying, which takes place at school does not only affect an individual during childhood but can have a lasting effect on their lives well into adulthood”.

Department of Education Preventing and Tackling Bullying, July 2017

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1. Statement of intent

As a school with a Church of England foundation we recognise the need for each student to be seen as individuals, created by God, with the right to thrive and live 'LIFE' in all of its fullness whilst at school. We summarise this tenet as Gryphon 10:10. This policy is part of our work to support all of our students to develop positive and healthy relationships during their time at school.

The Gryphon School believes that all pupils are entitled to learn in a safe and supportive environment; this means being free from all forms of bullying behaviour. This policy outlines how instances of bullying are dealt with, including the procedures to prevent occurrences of bullying.

These strategies, such as learning about tolerance and difference as part of the Gryphon School's curriculum, aim to promote an inclusive, tolerant and supportive ethos at the school.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 outlines several legal obligations regarding the school's response to bullying. Under section 89, schools must have measures in place to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. These measures are part of the The Gryphon School's Behaviour for Learning and Exclusion Policy, which is communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents.

All staff, parents and pupils work together to prevent and reduce any instances of bullying at the school, with middle leaders and SLT acting quickly to prevent escalation of bullying. **There is a zero-tolerance policy for bullying at the school.**

2. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- Communications Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Education Act 2011
- DfE (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying'
- DfE (2018) 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
- DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education (2020)'
- DfE (2020) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour for Learning and Exclusion Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy

3. Definitions

In the Autumn Term of 2021, The Gryphon School Council reaffirmed the definition of bullying as “persistent antisocial behaviour directed towards another person, including physical, verbal or cyber abuse and/or pressure which is purposely repeated”.

Bullying is generally characterised by:

- **Repetition:** Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over a period of time.
- **Intent:** The perpetrator(s) means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental.
- **Targeting:** Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.
- **Power imbalance:** Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations.

Vulnerable pupils are more likely to be the targets of bullying due to the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves. Vulnerable pupils may include, but are not limited to:

- Pupils with SEND.
- Pupils who are adopted.
- Pupils suffering from a health problem.
- Pupils with caring responsibilities.

Pupils with certain characteristics are also more likely to be targets of bullying, including, but not limited to:

- Pupils who are LGBTQ+, or perceived to be LGBTQ+.
- Pupils from BAME backgrounds.
- Pupils from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Bullying differs from friendship fall out or other aggressive behaviour where students of equal strength or standing quarrel or fight. Therefore, it is important that students, staff and parents are aware that not all negative actions, on investigation, can be defined as bullying.

4. Types of bullying

Many kinds of behaviour can be considered bullying, and bullying can be related to almost anything. Teasing another pupil because of their appearance, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, home life, culture, disability, or SEND are some of the types of bullying that can occur.

Bullying is acted out through the following mediums:

- Verbally
- Physically
- Emotionally
- Online (cyberbullying)

Racist bullying: Bullying another person based on their ethnic background, religion or skin colour. Racist bullying is a criminal offence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Public Order Act 1986.

Homophobic/biphobic bullying: Bullying another person because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

Transphobic bullying: Bullying based on another person's gender identity or gender presentation, or for not conforming to dominant gender roles.

Sexist and Misogynistic bullying: Bullying based on sexist attitudes expressed in a way to demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Sexist bullying may sometimes be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviours.

Sexual bullying: Bullying behaviour that has a physical, psychological, verbal or nonverbal sexual dimension or dynamic that subordinates, humiliates or intimidates another person. This is commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes.

Prejudicial bullying: Bullying based on prejudices directed towards specific characteristics, e.g. SEND or mental health issues.

Relational bullying: Bullying that primarily constitutes of excluding, isolating and ostracising someone – usually through verbal and emotional bullying.

Socioeconomic bullying: Bullying based on prejudices against the perceived social status of the victim, including, but not limited to, their economic status, their parents' occupations, their health or nutrition level, or the perceived "quality" of their clothing or belongings.

5. Roles and responsibilities

The **Academy Committee** is responsible for:

- Evaluating and reviewing this policy to ensure that it is not discriminatory.
- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring that the school adopts a tolerant and open-minded policy towards difference.
- Ensuring the school is inclusive.
- Analysing any bullying data to establish patterns and reviewing this policy in light of these.

The **Headteacher** is responsible for:

- Reviewing and amending this policy, accounting for new legislation and government guidance, and using staff experience of dealing with bullying incidents in previous years to improve procedures.
- Keeping a record of all reported incidents, including which type of bullying has occurred, to allow for proper analysis of the data collected.
- Analysing the data at termly intervals to identify trends, so that appropriate measures to tackle them can be implemented.
- Arranging appropriate training for staff members.

The **Assistant Headteacher (Behaviour and Attitudes)** is responsible for:

- Supporting the Headteacher in updating the policy, professionally developing their knowledge and awareness of trends both locally and nationally.
- Supporting the Heads of Year with bullying incidents across year groups, outside of school and escalating the sanctions to an appropriate level.
- Sharing data with the Headteacher and tracking students who are bullying/being bullied, including regular check ins with parents.

Heads of Year are responsible for:

- Corresponding and meeting with parents where necessary.
- Providing a point of contact for pupils and parents when more serious bullying incidents occur.

Teachers are responsible for:

- Being alert to social dynamics in their class.

- Being available for pupils who wish to report bullying.
- Providing follow-up support after bullying incidents.
- Being alert to possible bullying situations, particularly exclusion from friendship groups, and informing the pupil's Heads of Year of such observations.
- Refraining from stereotyping when dealing with bullying.
- Understanding the composition of pupil groups, showing sensitivity to those who have been the victims of bullying.
- Reporting any instances of bullying once they have been approached by a pupil for support.

Parents are responsible for:

- Informing their child's Head of Year or Tutor if they have any concerns that their child is the victim of bullying or involving in bullying in anyway.
- Being watchful of their child's behaviour, attitude and characteristics and informing the relevant staff members of any changes.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Informing a member of staff if they witness bullying or are a victim of bullying.
- Not making counter-threats if they are victims of bullying.
- Walking away from dangerous situations and avoiding involving other pupils in incidents.
- Keeping evidence of cyberbullying and informing a member of staff should they fall victim to cyberbullying.

6. Statutory implications

The school understands that, under the Equality Act 2010, it has a responsibility 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.

Although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, some types of harassment, threatening behaviour and/or communications may be considered criminal offences:

- Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to electronically communicate with another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or in a way which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or contains information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by means of a public electronic communications network, a message, or other matter, that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information through any media, including internet sites.
- Other forms of bullying which are illegal and should be reported to the police include violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation, and hate crimes.

7. Prevention

The Gryphon School is developing a culture that embraces differences and never tolerates bullying through our **“Respect you, Respect me”** school improvement strand, which includes our “I Am Me” campaign, our Gryphon Pride Group, our Equality Council and our Diversity & Equality Lead member of staff. All members of the school will be made aware of this policy and their responsibilities in relation to it. All staff members will receive training on identifying and dealing with the different types of bullying. All reported or investigated instances of bullying will be investigated by a member of staff. All types of bullying will be discussed as part of the PHSRE curriculum.

Staff will encourage pupil cooperation and the development of interpersonal skills using group and pair work. Diversity, difference and respect for others will be promoted and celebrated through various lessons. Seating plans will be organised and altered in a way that prevents instances of bullying. Potential victims of bullying will be placed in working groups with other pupils who do not abuse or take advantage of others. Opportunities to extend friendship groups and interactive skills will be provided through participation in special events, e.g. drama productions, sporting activities and cultural groups.

The Blue Room is a safe place, supervised by a member of staff, and will be available for pupils to go to during free time if they feel threatened or wish to be alone. The member of staff supervising the Blue Room will speak to pupils to find out the cause of any problems and, ultimately, stop any form of bullying taking place. Tutors will also offer an ‘open door’ policy allowing pupils to discuss any bullying, whether they are victims or have witnessed an incident. The school will be alert to, and address, any mental health and wellbeing issues amongst pupils, as these can be a cause of bullying behaviour.

The school will be alert to instances of the sharing of indecent imagery of pupils amongst the school cohort, and will evaluate whether the instance is part of normal sexual development or whether it presents a safeguarding concern. The school will ensure potential perpetrators are given support as required, so their educational, emotional and social development isn’t negatively influenced by outside factors, e.g. mental health issues.

With the introduction of our “Gryphon Reset” assemblies, students are reminded each half term about standards and expectations, including our zero-tolerance on bullying and the sanctions in place if they decide to not be respectful.

8. Signs of bullying

Staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a pupil is a victim of bullying:

- Being frightened to travel to or from school
- Unwillingness to attend school
- Repeated or persistent absence from school
- Becoming anxious or lacking confidence
- Saying that they feel ill repeatedly
- Decreased involvement in school work
- Leaving school with torn clothes or damaged possessions
- Missing possessions
- Asking for money or stealing
- Cuts or bruises
- Lack of appetite
- Unwillingness to use the internet or mobile devices
- Becoming agitated when receiving calls or text messages
- Lack of eye contact
- Becoming short tempered
- Change in behaviour and attitude at home

Although the signs outlined above may not be due to bullying, they may be due to deeper social, emotional or mental health issues, so are still worth investigating. Pupils who display a significant number of these signs will be approached by a member of staff to determine the underlying issues causing this behaviour.

Staff will be aware of the potential factors that may indicate a pupil is likely to exhibit bullying behaviours, including, but not limited to, the following:

- They have experienced mental health problems, which have led to them becoming more easily aggravated
- They have been the victim of abuse
- Their academic performance has started to fall and they are showing signs of stress

If staff become aware of any factors that could lead to bullying behaviours, they will notify the pupil's Tutor, who will investigate the matter and monitor the situation.

9. Staff principles

The Gryphon School will ensure that prevention is a prominent aspect of its antibullying vision. Staff will treat reports of bullying seriously and they will not ignore signs of suspected bullying. Staff will act immediately when they become aware of a bullying incident. Unpleasantness from one pupil towards another will always be challenged and will never be ignored.

Staff will always respect pupils' privacy, and information about specific instances of bullying are not discussed with others, unless the pupil has given consent, or there is a safeguarding concern. If a member of staff believes a pupil is in danger, e.g. of being hurt, they will inform the DSL immediately.

Follow-up support will be given to both the victim and perpetrator in the months following an incident to ensure all bullying has stopped. Regular communication from home will be at the forefront of the support we offer the families who are involved in bullying.

10. Peer-on-peer abuse

The Gryphon School has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of peer-on-peer abuse, including sexual harassment and sexual violence. Sexual harassment refers to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that occurs online or offline. Sexual harassment violates a child's dignity and makes them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated, and can create a hostile, sexualised or offensive environment. If left unchallenged, sexual harassment can create an atmosphere that normalises inappropriate behaviour and may lead to sexual violence.

The Gryphon School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy outlines our stance on addressing peer-on-peer sexual abuse, and the procedures in place will be adhered to if any instances of sexual harassment or sexual violence be uncovered. To prevent peer-on-peer abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, the school will educate pupils about abuse, its forms, and the importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others through the curriculum, assemblies and PSRHE lessons. The school will also ensure that pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum in PSRHE lessons. Such content will be specific to age and stage of development, and tackle issues such as the following:

- Healthy relationships □ Respectful behaviour
- Gender roles, stereotyping and equality
- Body confidence and self-esteem
- Prejudiced behaviour
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment is always wrong
- Addressing cultures of sexual harassment

All staff will be aware that pupils of any age and sex are capable of abusing their peers, and will never tolerate abuse as "banter" or "part of growing up". Staff will also be aware that peer-on-peer abuse can be manifested in many ways, including sexting, sexual harassment and assault, and hazing-/initiation-type violence. Where a pupil is found to have been involved in harmful sexual behaviour, the school will help the pupil to move forward from the incident by supporting them in adopting more positive behaviour patterns and attitudes.

All staff will be made aware of the heightened vulnerability of pupils with SEND, who are more likely to be abused than their peers. Staff will not assume that possible indicators of abuse relate to the pupil's SEND and will always explore indicators further. Staff will be aware that LGBTQ+ pupils are more likely to be targeted by their peers. In some cases, pupils who are perceived to be LGBTQ+, whether they are or not, can be just as vulnerable to abuse as LGBTQ+ pupils. The school's response to sexual violence

and sexual harassment between pupils of the same sex will be equally as robust as it is for incidents between pupils of the opposite sex.

Pupils will be made aware of how to raise concerns or make a report and how any reports will be handled – this includes the process for reporting concerns about friends or peers. If a pupil has been harmed, is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to children's social care services (CSCS).

Managing disclosures

Victims will always be taken seriously, reassured, supported and kept safe. Victims will never be made to feel like they are causing a problem or made to feel ashamed. If a friend of a victim makes a report or a member of staff overhears a conversation, staff will act – they will never assume that someone else will deal with it. The basic principles remain the same as when a victim reports an incident; however, staff will consider why the victim has not chosen to make a report themselves and the discussion will be handled sensitively and with the help of CSCS where necessary. Staff will report all allegations of abuse against pupils to the DSL. If staff are in any doubt over how to handle an incident or report, they will speak to the DSL. If a report involves a pupil with SEND, the DSL will record the incident in writing and, working with the SENCO, decide what course of action is necessary, with the best interests of the pupil in mind at all times.

Confidentiality

The school will only engage with staff and agencies required to support the victim and/or be involved in any investigation. If a victim asks the school not to tell anyone about the disclosure, the school will not make this promise. Even without the victim's consent, the information may still be lawfully shared if it is in the public interest and protects children from harm.

The DSL will consider the following when making confidentiality decisions:

- Parents will be informed unless it will place the victim at greater risk
- If a pupil is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger or has been harmed, a referral will be made to CSCS
- Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are crimes – reports containing any such crimes will be passed to the police

11. Cyberbullying

The Gryphon School has a zero-tolerance approach to cyberbullying. The school views cyberbullying with the same severity as any other form of bullying and will follow the sanctions set out in this policy if they become aware of any incidents.

The school will support pupils who have been victims of cyberbullying by holding formal and informal discussions with the pupil about their feelings and whether the bullying has stopped, in accordance with this policy.

In accordance with the Education Act 2011, the school has the right to examine and delete files from pupils' personal devices, e.g. mobiles phones, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone.

The Gryphon school work closely with the police, as well as other external agencies, to continually develop strategies to prevent bullying and react quickly when an issue arises.

12. Procedures

The Gryphon School Council established that the support they would like to see in school for victims of bullying includes:

- A “button” on the student intranet that can access support
- A further “Report an Incident” button to share any school wide issues anonymously.
- Maintenance of our Peer Mentoring Scheme
- Access to the Oasis Group and Blue Room support

We address each incident of behaviour individually and appropriately. The common elements of each response will include:

- Listen to the young person who has been bullied and identify the type of support they feel they need
- Listen to the young person who has bullied and identify the type of support they need
- Apply disciplinary protocols consistently and fairly
- Carefully consider and decide upon the appropriate level of parental involvement for both parties
- Complete the schools recording forms and involve outside agencies (such as Educational Psychologists, and Behaviour Support Service) as appropriate
- We use Progresso/My Concern to record incidents of bullying to ensure that key members of staff are informed of all incidents. This data can easily be used to identify trends or major issues.
- We track the outcomes of individual incidents of bullying and monitor the progress we are making with respect to the anti-bullying agenda. We recognise that success will be associated with satisfaction shown by young people and parent/carers and not necessarily via a reduction in reported incidents.
- The School will publish the results of evaluations at Staff Meetings, school Council Meetings, Academy Committee Meetings and Parent Forum Meetings.

Child Protection

We recognise that under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is “reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm”. Where this is the case, our school staff will report their concerns to the Designated Senior Person for Child Protection who will refer to Children’s Services Social Care.

13. Sanctions

If the Head of Year is satisfied that bullying did take place, the pupil will be helped to understand the consequences of their actions and warned that there must be no further incidents. The Head of Year will inform the pupil of the type of sanction to be used in this instance and future sanctions if the bullying continues in line with the school's Behaviour for Learning and Exclusion Policy.

If possible, the Head of Year will attempt reconciliation and will obtain an apology from the perpetrator. This will either be in writing to the victim (and/or witnesses if appropriate), or face-to-face, but only with the victim's full consent. Discretion will be used here; victims will never feel pressured into a face-to-face meeting with the perpetrator. Parents are informed of bullying incidents and what action is being taken. The Head of Year monitors the pupils involved over the next few weeks.

The Gryphon school believe that restorative justice can have a positive impact in these situations and will work with the victim to assure they feel safe and secure in school moving forwards.

14. Support

After the initial complaint of bullying, the Tutor will hold an informal discussion with the victim, on a weekly basis, to check whether the bullying has stopped. Where appropriate, the Head of Year will hold a formal meeting to check whether the bullying has stopped; these formal meetings will continue to take place once a month until the Head of Year and victim are confident the bullying has stopped. The victim will be encouraged to tell a trusted adult in school if bullying is repeated.

If necessary, group dynamics will be broken up by members of staff by assigning places in classes. The victim will be encouraged to broaden their friendship groups by joining lunchtime or after-school clubs or activities. Staff will work with the victim to build resilience.

15. Follow-up support

The progress of both the perpetrator and the victim will be monitored by their Tutors. One-on-one sessions to discuss how the victim and perpetrator are progressing may be appropriate. If appropriate, follow-up correspondence will be arranged with parents after the incident.

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported in the following ways:

- Being listened to
- Having an immediate opportunity to meet with their Head of Year or a member of staff of their choice
- Being reassured
- Being offered continued support
- Being offered counselling, where appropriate

Pupils who have bullied others will be supported in the following ways:

- Receiving a consequence for their actions
- Being able to discuss what happened
- Being helped to reflect on why they became involved
- Being helped to understand what they did wrong and why they need to change their behaviour
- Appropriate assistance from parents

16. Bullying outside of school

The Headteacher has a specific statutory power to discipline pupils for poor behaviour outside of the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives the Headteacher the power to regulate pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises, and therefore, not under the lawful charge of a school staff member.

Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside of the school premises. This can relate to any 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 will be investigated and acted upon. In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying, members of staff can only discipline the pupil on school premises, or elsewhere when the pupil is under the lawful control of the member of staff, e.g. on a school trip.

The Headteacher is responsible for determining whether it is appropriate to notify the police of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be of a criminal nature, or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police will be informed.