

Anti-Bullying Policy

Statement of intent

At Epinay School all students 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, e.g. learning about tolerance and difference as part of the 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 students. These measures are part of the school's Behaviour Policy, which is communicated to all students, school staff and parents.

All staff, parents and students work together to prevent and reduce any instances of bullying at the school. There is a zero-tolerance policy for bullying at the school. We firmly believe that every student should feel safe.

Aims

- To create a climate where bullying and prejudice based incidents are not accepted;
- To enable students to develop / practise appropriate social skills;
- To teach the values which render bullying to be unacceptable;
- To ensure that all school staff, students and parents/carers know how they can both prevent bullying from starting and respond if it happens;
- To empower victims of bullying to seek help and support
- To make sure bullying is stopped as soon as possible if it does happen and that those involved receive the support they need
- To help students who bully to change their behaviour;
- To involve every – staff, students, parents / carers and governors in acting against bullying and wherever it occurs.

Objectives:

- Providing students and parents / carers with information and advice;
- Providing staff with relevant training as necessary;
- Discussing bullying issues within the curriculum including LGBT+ issues and forms of discrimination;
- Regularly using assembly time to raise the issue of bullying;
- Displaying anti bullying messages around school;
- Recognising the achievements of all our students and celebrating success publicly;
- Affording students opportunities and responsibility for shaping our school community and practices;
- Regularly reinforcing the importance of the school rules;
- Treating every reported incident of bullying seriously;
- Continually monitoring the incidents of bullying and conducting surveys of students and parents/carers.

Ways of preventing bullying:

We believe that everyone can help to prevent bullying from starting in the first place and can take action if they find out this is happening.

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
- DfE (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2023'
- DCMS, DSIT, and UK Council for Internet Safety (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 Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSE) Policy

Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, "bullying" is defined as persistent behaviour by an individual or group with the intention of verbally, physically, or emotionally harming another person or group. Bullying is generally characterised by:

- **Repetition:** Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over an extended period of time.
- **Intent:** The perpetrator means to intentionally cause hurtful 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 students 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. Students with certain characteristics are also more likely to be targets of bullying, including, but not limited to:

- students who are LGBTQ+, or perceived to be LGBTQ+.
- Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) students.
- faith targeted young people
- young carers
- students with SEND.
- young people who are refugees
- young people in receipt of free school meals
- homophobic, transgender and biophobic young people

Types of bullying

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

Bullying is acted out through the following mediums:

- Verbal

- Physical
- Emotional
- Online (cyberbullying)

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

Homophobic and 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 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 non-verbal sexual dimension or dynamic that subordinates, humiliates or intimidates another person. This is commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes.

Ableist bullying: Bullying behaviour that focuses on another person's disability or support needs; this can include mocking the individual's disability or their needs, using derogatory words or slurs in relation to an individual's disability, or deliberately excluding an individual because of their disability.

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

Relational bullying: Bullying that primarily consists 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.

Faith-targeted bullying is repetitive, intentional, and harmful behavior directed at a person because of their actual or perceived religion, faith, or religious practices. It is a form of identity-based bullying designed to make someone feel uncomfortable, unsafe, or humiliated due to their beliefs

Carer bullying is defined as the repetitive, intentional hurting of a person or group—particularly young carers or those with care responsibilities—by others, often stemming from an imbalance of power, to make them feel "different" or isolated. It includes physical violence, verbal abuse, or social exclusion because of their care role

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for:

- Reviewing this policy to ensure that it does not discriminate against any students on the basis of their protected characteristics or backgrounds.
- The overall implementation and monitoring of this policy.
- Ensuring that all governors are appropriately trained regarding safeguarding and child protection at induction.
- Ensuring that the school adopts a tolerant and open-minded policy towards difference.
- Ensuring the school is inclusive.
- Ensuring the DSL has the appropriate status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the role.
- Appointing a safeguarding link governor who will work with the DSL to ensure the policies and practices relating to safeguarding, including the prevention of cyberbullying, are being implemented effectively.
- Ensuring that students are taught how to keep themselves and others safe, including online.

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Keeping a serious incident log of all reported incidents of bullying.

DSL 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.
- Analysing any data relating to bullying identified on CPOMS at termly intervals to identify trends, so that appropriate measures to tackle them can be implemented.
- Arranging appropriate training for staff members. Corresponding and meeting with parents where necessary
- Providing a point of contact for students and parents when more serious bullying incidents occur and exploring incidents

Teachers are responsible for:

- Being alert to social dynamics in their class and in the wider school.
- Being available for students 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 DSL and MAKW such observations.
- Refraining from stereotyping when dealing with bullying.
- Understanding the composition of student groups, showing sensitivity to those who have been the victims of bullying.
- Reporting any instances of bullying to DSL/SLT once they have been approached by a student for support.

Parents are responsible for:

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

Students 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 students in incidents.
- Keeping evidence of cyberbullying and informing a member of staff should they fall victim to cyberbullying.

Statutory requirements

- The school understands that, under the Equality Act 2010, it has a responsibility to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, including sexual 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.
- The school understands that, under the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998, it could have charges brought against it if it allows the rights of students to be breached by failing to take bullying seriously. The Head Teacher will ensure that this policy complies with the HRA; the Head Teacher understands that they cannot do this without fully involving their teaching staff.
- 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.

Prevention

The school will clearly communicate a whole-school commitment to addressing bullying and have a clear set of values and standards which will be regularly promoted across the whole school.

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 types of bullying will be discussed as part of the PSHE curriculum, in line with the Relationships, Sex and Education (RSE) Policy.

The curriculum will explore and discuss issues at age-appropriate stages such as:

- Healthy and respectful relationships.
- Boundaries and consent.
- Stereotyping, prejudice and equality.
- Body confidence and self-esteem.
- How to recognise abusive relationships and coercive control.
- Harmful sexual behaviour, the concepts involved and why they are always unacceptable, and the laws relating to it.

Staff will encourage student 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. 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.

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 students who do not abuse or take advantage of others.

A safe place, supervised by a teacher, will be available for students to go to during free time if they feel threatened or wish to be alone. The teacher supervising the area will speak to students to find out the cause of any problems and, ultimately, stop any form of bullying taking place.

The school will be alert to, and address, any mental health and wellbeing issues amongst students, as these can be a cause, or a result, of bullying behaviour.

The school will ensure potential perpetrators are given support as required, so their educational, emotional and social development is not negatively influenced by outside factors, e.g. mental health issues.

Signs of bullying

Staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a student 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
- · Missing dinner money
- · Asking for extra money or stealing
- · Cuts or bruises
- · Lack of appetite
- · Unwillingness to use the internet or mobile devices
- · 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. Students who display a significant number of these signs will be approached by a member of staff to determine the underlying issues causing this behaviour.

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

Staff will:

- ensure that prevention is a prominent aspect of its anti-bullying vision.
- treat reports of bullying seriously and will not ignore signs of suspected bullying.
- act immediately when they become aware of a bullying incident. Unpleasantness from one student towards another will always be challenged and will never be ignored.
- always respect students' privacy, and information about specific instances of bullying is not discussed with others, unless the student has given consent, or there is a safeguarding concern. If a member of staff believes a student 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

Child-on-child abuse

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

To prevent child-on-child abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, the school will educate students about abuse, its forms, and the importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others through the curriculum, assemblies and PSHE lessons, in line with the Prevention section of this policy.

All staff will:

- Be aware that students of any age and gender are capable of abusing their peers.
- Be aware that abuse can occur inside and outside of school settings.
- Be aware of the scale of harassment or abuse, and that just because it is not being reported does not mean it is not happening.
- Take all instances of child-on-child abuse equally seriously regardless of the characteristics of the perpetrators or victims.
- Never tolerate abuse as "banter" or "part of growing up", and will never justify sexual harassment, e.g. as "boys being boys", as this can foster a culture of unacceptable behaviours and one that risks normalising abuse.
- Be aware that child-on-child abuse can be manifested in many ways, including sexting, sexual harassment and assault, and hazing or initiation-type violence.
- Always challenge any harmful physical behaviour that is sexual in nature, such as inappropriate touching. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.
- Sexual harassment in particular can take many forms, including but not limited to:
- Telling sexual stories, making sexual remarks, or calling someone sexualised names.

- Sexual “jokes” or taunting.
- Deliberately brushing against someone.
- Displaying images or video of a sexual nature.
- Upskirting (this is a criminal offence).
- Online sexual harassment, e.g. creating or sharing sexual imagery, sexual comments on social media, or sexual coercion or threats.

Students 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 student has been harmed, is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral may be made to children’s social care services and potentially the police, where the DSL deems this appropriate in the circumstances.

All staff will be aware and sensitive towards the fact that students may not be ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused. Students being abused may feel embarrassed, humiliated, scared, or threatened.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can take many forms and can go even further than face-to-face bullying by invading personal space and home life, and can target more than one person. It can also take place across age groups and target students, staff and others, and may take place inside school, within the wider community, at home or when travelling. It can sometimes draw bystanders into being accessories.

Cyberbullying can include the following:

- Threatening, intimidating or upsetting text messages
- Threatening or embarrassing pictures and video clips
- Disclosure of private sexual photographs or videos with the intent to cause distress
- Silent or abusive phone calls
- Using the victim’s phone to harass others, to make them think the victim is responsible
- Threatening or bullying emails, possibly sent using a pseudonym or someone else’s name
- Menacing or upsetting responses to someone in a chatroom
- Unpleasant messages sent via instant messaging
- Unpleasant comments posted to, social networking sites, e.g. Facebook

NB. The above list is not exhaustive, and cyberbullying may take other forms.

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to cyberbullying that takes place within school. 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.

All members of staff will receive training on an annual basis on the signs of cyberbullying, in order to identify students who may be experiencing issues and intervene effectively where appropriate..

Staff and students will be instructed not to respond or retaliate to cyberbullying incidents. Evidence of the incident should be recorded, e.g. taking screenshots. students will report incidents to the DSL if it occurred in school or to their parents if the incident happened outside of school.

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

Procedures

Students

- **What can a student do if they are being bullied?:**
- Do not retaliate by becoming a physical or verbal bully yourself;
- Do not keep it a secret. Talk about it to a staff member, family or friends;

- There are many adults in school who want to help – they can help to decide how to handle the situation and take necessary action;
- Tell the bully to stop.

Staff members

Any member of staff who observes or whom a bullying incident is reported to should:

- Listen carefully to the student, give them sufficient opportunity to discuss their concerns, describe what it is, what has been happening and treat what they say seriously.
- Reassure the student that they have done the right thing and thank them for either reporting the bullying themselves and/or agreeing to discuss the matter. Give them the support by assuring them that school will take appropriate action.
- If it is established that the incident was a one off then it should be dealt with accordingly. A note should be made on CPOMS that they have reported an incident as bullying. If an incident of bullying is prejudice based, staff will report using the school's prejudice document to SLT or MAKW.
- If a pattern of bullying behaviour is established then the member of staff should record the details on an incident sheet and report this information to the safeguarding team.

The DSL or senior member of staff will :

- Interview the bullied student and ask them to talk about their feelings and worries, avoiding direct questions about incidents, though trying to establish all involved.
- Contact parents/carers and inform them of the situation and the intended course of action.
- Explain to the bullying student/s how the bullied student/s is feeling without discussing the details of the incidents or allocating blame.
- Clarify with the bullying individual or group that they are responsible and can do something about. The focus is continually upon a solution to the problem rather than apportioning blame.
- Ask the bullying individual or group in turn to identify ways in which they could help the bullied student/s feel happier in school.
- Conclude the meeting by re-emphasising the individual's or group's responsibility to solve the bullying problem.
- Arrange to meet again to review how successful the remedial actions have been.
- After an agreed period of time see all concerns individually to see how things have been going.
- Record the actions of the process on CPOMS.
- If bullying situations do not improve and bullying behaviours continue then school will consider:
 - Involving parents/carers directly and inviting them in for a meeting;
 - Devising a behaviour management plan;
 - Rearranging class groups or dynamics;
 - Referring for counselling/therapy;
 - Excluding bullies.

Bullying In The Community

We are very aware that bullying is also an issue for many young people outside of school. Students may experience bullying behaviour within their home or communities. These matters should be shared with parents and dealt with by informing the police if appropriate.

Record keeping

The DSL will ensure that robust records are kept with regard to all reported or otherwise uncovered incidents of bullying – this includes recording on CPOMS where decisions have been made, e.g. sanctions, support, escalation of a situation and resolutions.

The Head Teacher and DSL will ensure that all decisions and actions recorded are reviewed on a regular basis.

Date Approved by Governors	June 2026
Date of next review by Governors:	June 2027