Anti-bullying Policy

Ratified by Full Governing Body: October 2026

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Date Agreed	October 2026
Signed by Headteacher	Nicola Hirst
Signed (Chair of Governors)	Kate Bell
Date Policy to be Reviewed	October 2028
VERSION CONTROL: Reviewed biennially and/or following any concerns and/or updates to local/national guidance or procedures.	

Key Contact Personnel

Nominated member of leadership staff responsible for this policy:

Katie Norman

&

Designated Safeguarding Lead (s):

Nicola Hirst DSL (Headteacher)

Mark O'Gormley (Deputy Headteacher)

Katie Norman (Senior Leadership Team)

Sarah Beaney (Senior Leader Team)

Kerry Smith (SENDCO)

Tracy Wilson (FLO)

Joanna Wright (Upper School Lead)

Named Governor with lead responsibility:

Kate Bell (Chair of Governors)

Ashford St Mary's Anti-bullying Policy

Policy framework and content

This policy provides a framework to enable us to ensure that all of our children, regardless of background or circumstances, fulfil their potential within our Christian community. The school Christian Values of Respect, Friendship, Perseverance, Forgiveness, Compassion and Trust are applied when writing and using this policy. We want our children to be fully prepared for God's ever changing world. We will use this policy and Department for Education guidance to help us ensure that our children are prepared for their future.

This policy is based on DfE guidance, specifically, Approaches to preventing and tackling bullying - GOV.UK and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

The setting has also read the Cyberbullying Guidance | Childnet for schools about understanding, preventing and responding to cyberbullying.

***Generative artificial intelligence (AI)**

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Bard.

Ashford St Mary's Primary School recognises that AI has many uses to help pupils learn, but may also have the potential to be used to bully others. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.

Ashford St Mary's Primary School will treat any use of AI to bully pupils in line with this anti-bullying policy.

1) Policy objective

Ashford St Mary's Primary School is committed to **maintaining** an anti-bullying culture where the bullying of children and all adults within our school community is not tolerated.

This policy:

- Outlines what Ashford St Mary's Primary School will do to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying
- Is informed by the Department for Education guidance
- Is shaped by, and in direct response to, the experiences, circumstances and needs of our school community

2) Links with school policies and external guidance

This policy links with several of our school policies and also Department for Education (DfE) guidance, including, but not limited to:

- Behaviour for Learning policy
- Complaints policy
- Child protection policy
- Confidentiality policy
- Acceptable Use policy
- Social media policy
- RSE/PSHE policy
- Searching, screening and confiscation advice for schools (DfE guidance)

3) Anti-bullying policy legislative links

There are several pieces of legislation which set out measures and actions for schools in response to bullying, as well as criminal and civil law. These may include, but are not limited to, the:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Children Act 1989
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Communications Act 2003
- Public Order Act 1986

4) Responsibilities

We do not tolerate bullying and we require all members of our school community to work together to uphold our anti-bullying policy and procedures. The specific responsibilities are as follows:

- **All staff,** including: governors, site staff, administration staff are to uphold and implement this policy accordingly.

- Governors and Senior Leaders will monitor and review this policy.

- Parents/carers will support their children and work in partnership with the school.

- Children will abide by the policy.

- The headteacher will:
    - communicate this policy to the school community
    - ensure that disciplinary measures and sanctions are applied fairly, consistently and reasonably
    - Identify a member of the senior leadership team to take overall responsibility.

5) The Department for Education definition of bullying:

> ***"Bullying is 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 can include physical and emotional abuse such as name calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, kicking, hitting, pushing, taking belongings, producing offensive graffiti, gossiping; excluding people from groups and spreading hurtful rumours.

- Bullying can be 'online', sometimes called cyberbullying. This can include but is not limited to: sending offensive, upsetting and inappropriate messages by phone, text, instant messenger, email, through gaming, websites, social media, and sending offensive or degrading photos or videos, including the use of ***Generative artificial intelligence (AI)***.

- Bullying is recognised by the school as being a form of child on child abuse. It can be emotionally abusive and can cause severe and adverse effects on children's emotional development.

    - Abuse is abuse and it should never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up".
    - We recognise that even if there are no reports of bullying, it does not mean it is not happening and it may be the case that it is just not being reported.
    - All victims will be taken seriously and offered appropriate support, regardless of where the abuse takes place.

6) Forms and types of bullying covered by this policy

This policy covers all types and forms of bullying including, but not limited to:

- Bullying related to physical appearance
- Bullying of young carers, children in care or otherwise related to home circumstances
- Bullying related to physical/mental health conditions
- Physical bullying
- Emotional bullying
- Sexualised bullying/harassment
- Bullying via or using technology, including:
    - Any online/cyberbullying
    - Use of Generative artificial intelligence (AI) to produce deepfakes
- Prejudicial bullying (against people/pupils with protected characteristics):
    - Bullying related to race, religion, faith and belief and for those without faith
    - Bullying related to ethnicity, nationality or culture
    - Bullying related to Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND)
    - Bullying related to sexual orientation (homophobic/biphobic bullying)
    - Gender based bullying, including transphobic bullying
    - Bullying against teenage parents (pregnancy & maternity under the Equality Act)

7) School ethos

Ashford St Mary's Primary School recognises that all forms of bullying can have a devastating effect on a person and have serious consequences for mental wellbeing. By effectively preventing and tackling bullying our school can help to create a safe and disciplined environment, where our children are able to learn and fulfil their potential.

Our staff:

- Understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers.
- Monitor and review our anti-bullying policy and practice on a regular basis.
- Promote and teach about positive relationships to help prevent bullying.
- Recognise that some members of our community may be more vulnerable to bullying and its impact than others; this may include children with SEND.
    - *Being aware of this will help us to develop effective strategies to prevent bullying from happening and provide appropriate support, if required.*

- Will intervene by identifying and tackling bullying behaviour appropriately and promptly.
- Ensure that our children are aware that bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively and that everyone should feel safe to learn and abide by the anti-bullying policy.
- Recognise the potential impact of bullying on the wider family of those affected so will work in partnership with parents/carers regarding all reported bullying concerns and will seek to keep them informed at all stages.
- Seek to learn from excellent anti-bullying practice elsewhere.
- Utilise support from the Local Authority and other relevant organisations when appropriate.
- Will deal with grievances regarding the school response to bullying in line with our complaints policy

8) Responding to bullying

The following steps will be taken when dealing with all incidents of bullying reported to the school:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached or witnessed the concern.
- A clear and precise account of bullying incidents will be recorded by the school in accordance with existing procedures. This will include recording appropriate details regarding decisions and action taken.
- The school will provide appropriate support for the person being bullied - doing everything they can to ensure the victim is not at risk of immediate harm and will involve them in any decision making, as appropriate.
- The headteacher or a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or another member of leadership staff will interview all parties involved.
- A DSL will be informed of all bullying issues where there are safeguarding concerns.
- The school will speak with and inform other staff members, where appropriate.
- The school will ensure parents/carers are kept informed about the concern. This communication will be in adherence with child protection and confidentiality laws.
- Appropriate consequences/sanctions and support will be implemented in consultation with all parties concerned. *We cannot share the specific details of sanctions and consequences given to a perpetrator with the victim's parents/carers.*
- If necessary, other agencies may be consulted or involved, such as the police, if a criminal offence has been committed, or other local services including early help or children's social care, if a child is felt to be at risk of significant harm.

- Where the bullying (including cyberbullying) of, or by, one of our pupils takes place offsite* and/or outside of the normal school hours, the school will ensure that the concern is fully investigated. **Offsite includes **any** bullying that occurs **anywhere** such as, public transport, in local shops, in the town centre or online.*
- If necessary we will collaborate with other schools and/or the police.
    - *Appropriate action will be taken, including providing support and implementing sanctions in school in accordance with this policy and our Behaviour for Learning policy. This adheres to the Education and Inspections Act 2006*

Cyberbullying:
When responding to cyberbullying concerns, the school will:

- Act as soon as an incident has been reported or identified.
- Provide appropriate support for the person who has been cyberbullied and work with the person who has carried out the bullying to ensure that it does not happen again.
- Encourage the person being bullied to keep any evidence (screenshots) of the bullying activity to assist any investigation.
- Take all available steps where possible to identify the person responsible. This may include:
    - looking at use of the school systems;
    - identifying and interviewing possible witnesses;
    - Contact the service provider and the police, if necessary.
- Work with the individuals and online service providers to prevent the incident from spreading and assist in removing offensive or upsetting material from circulation. This may include:
    - Support reports to a service provider to remove content if those involved are unable to be identified or if those involved refuse to or are unable to delete content.
    - Confiscating and searching pupils' electronic devices, such as mobile phones, in accordance with the law and the school searching and confiscation policy. (*Note: Schools should ensure they access the DfE* 'Searching, screening and confiscation at school' *and* Childnet *cyberbullying guidance to ensure that the schools powers are used proportionately and lawfully*)
    - Requesting the deletion of locally-held content and content posted online if they contravene school behavioural policies.

- Where an individual can be identified, the school will ensure that consequences/sanctions are implemented to change the attitude and behaviour of the bully, as well as ensuring access to any additional help that they may need.
- Inform the police if a criminal offence has been committed.
- Provide information to staff and pupils regarding steps they can take to protect themselves online. This may include:
    - advising those targeted not to retaliate or reply;
    - providing advice on blocking or removing people from contact lists;
    - helping those involved to think carefully about what private information they may have in the public domain.

Supporting pupils

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Reassuring the pupil and providing continuous pastoral support.
- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with their teacher, the designated safeguarding lead, or a member of staff of their choice.
- Being advised to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to concerns and build resilience as appropriate.
- Working towards restoring self-esteem and confidence.
- Providing ongoing support; this may include: working and speaking with staff, offering formal counselling, engaging with parents and carers.
- Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance; this could include support through Early Help or Children Social Work Service, or support through the Children and Young People's Mental Health Service (CYPMHS).

Pupils who have perpetrated bullying will be helped by:

- Being sanctioned, in line with the school behaviour policy. This may include, but is not limited to:
    - *Anti-bullying reflection inside during playtime*
    - *Removal of privileges e.g. use of the playground at the same time as other children*
    - *Internal exclusion or fixed-term exclusion or permanent exclusion*
- Discussing what happened, establishing the concern and the need to change.
- Informing and asking their parents/carers to help change the attitude and behaviour of their child.

- Providing appropriate education and support regarding their behaviour or actions.
- If online, requesting that content be removed and reporting accounts/content to service providers.
- Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance; this may include involvement from the Police or referrals to Early Help, Children Social Work Service, or the Children and Young People's Mental Health Service (CYPMHS).

Supporting adults

Our school takes measures to prevent and tackle bullying among pupils; however, it is equally important to recognise that bullying of adults, including staff and parents, whether by pupils, parents or other staff members, is unacceptable.

Adults who have been bullied or affected will be supported by:

- Offering an opportunity to discuss the concern with the headteacher.
- Establishing whether a legitimate grievance or concern has been raised and signposting to the school's specific official procedure.
- Advising them to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to concerns and build resilience, as appropriate.
- Where the bullying takes place off school site or outside of normal school hours (including online), the school will still investigate the concern and ensure that appropriate action is taken in accordance with the schools' behaviour and discipline policy.
- Reporting offensive or upsetting content and/or accounts to the service provider, where the bullying has occurred online.
- Reassuring and offering appropriate support.
- Working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance.

Adults who have perpetrated the bullying will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened with a senior member of staff and/or the headteacher to establish the concern.
- If online, requesting that content be removed.
- Instigating disciplinary, civil or legal action as appropriate or required.

9) Preventing bullying

Environment

The whole school community will:

- Create and support an inclusive environment which promotes a culture of mutual respect, consideration and care for others, which will be upheld by all.
- Recognise that bullying can be perpetrated or experienced by any member of the community, including adults and children (child on child abuse).
- Recognises the potential for children with SEN and disabilities to be disproportionately impacted by bullying and will implement additional pastoral support as required.
- Openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as: children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities, religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related difference.
- Challenge practice and language (including 'banter') which does not uphold the school Christian Values and non-discrimination towards others.
- Be encouraged to use technology, especially mobile phones and social media, positively and responsibly.
- Work with staff, the wider community and outside agencies to prevent and tackle concerns including all forms of prejudice-driven bullying.
- Actively create "safe spaces" for vulnerable children and young people.
- Celebrate success and achievements to promote and build a positive school ethos.

Policy and support

Staff will:

- Provide a range of approaches for pupils, staff and parents/carers to access support and report concerns.
- Regularly update and evaluate our practice to consider the developments of technology and provide up-to-date advice and education to all members of the community regarding positive online behaviour.
- Take appropriate, proportionate and reasonable action, in line with existing school policies, for any bullying brought to the schools' attention, which involves or affects pupils, even when they are not on school premises.
- Implement appropriate disciplinary sanctions; the consequences of bullying will reflect the seriousness of the incident, so that others see that bullying is unacceptable.
- Use a variety of techniques to resolve the issues between those who bully, and those who have been bullied.

Education and Training

The Extended Leadership Team will:

- Train all staff, including: teaching staff, support staff (e.g. administration staff, lunchtime support staff and site support staff) and pastoral staff, to identify all forms of bullying and take appropriate action, following the school's policy and procedures, including recording and reporting incidents.
- Consider a range of opportunities and approaches for addressing bullying throughout the curriculum and other activities, such as: worship, peer support, the student council
- Collaborate with other local educational settings as appropriate, and during key times of the year, for example during transition.
- Ensure anti-bullying has a high profile throughout the year, reinforced through key opportunities such as anti-bullying week
- Provide systematic opportunities to develop pupils' social and emotional skills, including building their resilience and self-esteem.

10) Involvement of pupils

Staff will:

- Involve the lived experiences of our children in policy writing and decision making
- Ensure that our children understand the school's approach and are clear about the part they play in preventing bullying.
- Regularly get pupils' views on the extent and nature of bullying at our school.
- Ensure that all pupils know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying.
- Ensure that all pupils are aware of the range of sanctions which may be applied against those engaging in bullying.
- Share the embedded messages regarding Anti-bullying in the wider curriculum.
- Utilise pupil voice in providing pupil led education and support
- Publicise the details of internal support, as well as external helplines and websites.
- Offer support to pupils who have been bullied and to those who are bullying to address the problems they have.

11) Involvement and liaison with parents and carers

Staff will:

- Take steps, when appropriate, to involve parents and carers in developing policies and procedures
- Ensure that parents are aware that the school does not tolerate any form of bullying.
- Make sure that key information about bullying (including policies and named points of contact) is available to parents/carers in a variety of formats, including via the school website
- Ensure all parents/carers know who to contact if they are worried about bullying and where to access independent advice.
- Work with parents/carers and the local community to address issues beyond the school gates that give rise to bullying.
- Ensure that parents work with the school to role model positive behaviour for pupils, both on and offline.
- Ensure all parents/carers know about our complaints procedure and how to use it effectively, to raise concerns in an appropriate manner.

12) Monitoring and review: putting policy into practice

- The school will ensure that they regularly monitor and evaluate mechanisms to ensure that the policy is being consistently applied.
- Any issues identified will be incorporated into the school's action planning.
- The headteacher will be informed of bullying concerns, as appropriate.
- The named Governor for bullying will report on a regular basis to the governing body on incidents of bullying, including outcomes.

13) Useful links and supporting organisations

The following links may provide additional support to children, staff and/or families.

- 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: www.youngcarers.net
- The Restorative Justice Council: www.restorativejustice.org.uk/restorative-practiceschools

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 see section: ***'Cyberbullying: advice for headteachers and school staff*** www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying

- DfE see section: ***'Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying'*** www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying

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
- Schools Out: www.schools-out.org.uk
- Stonewall: www.stonewall.org.uk

Race, religion and nationality

- Anne Frank Trust: www.annefrank.org.uk
- Kick it Out: www.kickitout.org
- Report it: www.report-it.org.uk
- Stop Hate: www.stophateuk.org
- Tell Mama:www.tellmamauk.org
- Educate against Hate: www.educateagainsthate.com
- Show Racism the Red Card: www.srtrc.org/educational

Sexual harassment and sexual bullying

- Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAW) www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk
- *Ending Violence Against Women and Girls: a guide for schools:* www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/data/files/resources/71/EVAWCoalition-Schools-Guide.pdf
- Disrespect No Body: www.gov.uk/government/publications/disrespect-nobodycampaign-posters
- Anti-bullying Alliance: Preventing and responding to Sexual Bullying: www.antibullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-about-bullying/sexual-and-genderrelated/preventing-and-responding-sexual
- Anti-bullying Alliance: advice for school staff and professionals about developing effective anti-bullying practice in relation to sexual bullying: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-about-bullying/sexual-and-gender-related

Special Educational Needs

- Changing Faces: www.changingfaces.org.uk
- Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk
- Anti-Bullying Alliance Cyberbullying and children and young people with SEN and disabilities: www.cafamily.org.uk/media/750755/cyberbullying_and_send__module_final.pdf
- DfE: SEND code of practice: www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-ofpractice-0-to-25