



*Be courageous; Be strong. Do everything in love
(1 Corinthians 16:13-14)*

Bitterley CE Primary School

Anti-bullying Policy

Name of school Bitterley CE Primary

Date of policy September 2026

Member of staff responsible Mrs West

Review date September 2027

1 Context

1.1 Our School Values

Our policy seeks to develop self-discipline, respect for oneself, others and the environment and in doing so create a happy, inclusive, caring school, which enables effective teaching and learning to take place.

Be courageous, be strong. Do everything in love encourages all within our school to treat others kindly and with respect, knowing that they will be treated in the same way and that everyone should be given the opportunity to turn things around when behaviour has not been good.

Through our Christian vision and values we encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviour and show respect for others, emphasising the importance of positive relationships amongst all members and groups of the school community.

This policy is informed by:

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026** - particularly regarding online safety, peer-on-peer abuse, and sexual harassment
- **Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies (DfE, July 2017)**
- **Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff (DfE, November 2014)**
- **The Equality Act 2010**

1.2 Purpose of the anti-bullying policy:

This policy seeks to:

- Ensure the whole school community has a shared understanding of what bullying is and the detrimental impact it can have on wellbeing and achievement.
- Ensure staff, parents, carers, and pupils work together to ensure a safe learning environment for all and to safeguard pupils who experience bullying
- Prevent, de-escalate and or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour.
- Ensure all bullying behaviours and prejudiced based incidents are taken seriously, recorded and responded to in a proportionate and consistent way.
- Encourage shared solutions so that those reporting bullying have an appropriate say in what happens next
- Ensure those using bullying behaviour are supported to change their behaviour
- Outline the consequences for those who show bullying behaviour

- Ensure everyone is mutually valued and respected and that in line with the Equality Act 2010 we aim to eliminate discrimination based on sex, gender identity, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion and belief
- Encourage pupils to adopt agreed standards of behaviour and values in order to develop a sense of right and wrong and the ability to take responsibility for their own actions.

Our commitment is that when a pupil, parent or carer speaks out about bullying:

- they will be listened to
- their concerns will be taken seriously
- the matters will be investigated
- together we will find a way to tackle it
- someone will be there to help and support them.
- Someone will check in on them in the weeks following the event

2. Bullying

2.1 Definitions

Bullying takes place when a child, young person, adult or a group of deliberately try to hurt or upset another person or group of people on more than one occasion’

Children may be hurt or upset by other children’s behaviour but this only becomes bullying if it is repeated deliberately.

We define cyber bullying as the use of information and communications technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones, the internet, social media and online gaming to carry out deliberate, repeated and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others. **This includes the sharing, manipulation, or creation of images (including through AI technology) to embarrass, humiliate, or harm others.**

We recognise cyberbullying as an extension of face-to-face bullying, with technology providing another opportunity for bullying behaviour to harass their target. We recognise that cyberbullying can have a particularly negative impact because it can invade home and personal space. There are also challenges for example in controlling electronically circulated messages; the size of the audience; perceived anonymity; and even the profile of the person doing the bullying and their target. Ongoing changes to technology mean the methods used to bully keep evolving.

Bullying is not one-off acts of aggression or nastiness, such behaviours if repeated, however, may be viewed as bullying.

In this policy and in our anti-bullying work we try to avoid referring to bullies and victims as these label pupils in unhelpful ways.

2.2 Friendship issues, relational conflict and bullying behaviour

We acknowledge that friendship problems and bullying behaviour can be upsetting for both pupils and parents and carers, but it is important to distinguish between the two, as the responses to friendship problems will be different to the strategies used to address bullying behaviour.

Pupils will fall in and out with each other, have arguments, stop talking to each other and have disagreements. This relational conflict can be a normal part of growing up.

During a relational conflict or friendship problem groups of pupils may disagree, be very upset and find it difficult to resolve the disagreement without adult help. It is unlikely however, to be repeated behaviour and may even be accidental, but pupils will make an effort to resolve the problem and will want to resolve the problem.

However, we recognise that repeated friendship problems or relational conflict can sometimes lead to bullying behaviour particularly when there is an imbalance of power [when a group acts against an individual for example or a difference in ages].

2.3 Forms of bullying

Bullying can take many forms:

- Physical bullying (hitting, punching, finger jabbing, any inappropriate touching, pinching, jostling, breaking, damaging or taking property)
- Verbal bullying (name calling, taunts, put downs, threats, teasing, ridiculing, belittling, excessive criticism or sarcasm.)
- Emotional / psychological bullying (rumours or stories, exclusion from a group, shunning, invading privacy, graffiti designed to embarrass)
- Cyber-bullying (sending nasty phone messages or in e-mails/chatrooms/social media, games.)
- Sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour (unwanted conduct of a sexual nature including sexual comments, jokes, taunting, physical behaviour such as deliberately brushing against someone, online sexual harassment including sharing nudes or semi-nudes, AI-generated or manipulated images, upskirting, and pressuring someone to share images)
- Bullying takes place where there is an imbalance of power of one person or persons over another. This can relate to
 - the size of the individual,
 - the strength of the individual
 - the ages of the individuals

- the numbers or group size involved
- being from a majority rather than a minority group
- anonymity – through the use of cyberbullying or using email, social networking sites, messaging, games etc.

Bullying can take place in the classroom, playground, toilets, on the journey to and from school, on residential trips and cyberspace. It can take place in group activities and between families in the local community.

2.4 Prejudice-based bullying

Bullying is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, on the grounds of ethnicity, religion and belief, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation or disability. It might be motivated by actual differences, perceived differences or as a result of association with someone else.

We recognise that bullying related to protected characteristics can include:

- Racist bullying
- Bullying related to religion or belief
- Bullying related to sex or gender
- Bullying related to sexual orientation (homophobic, biphobic)
- Bullying related to gender identity (transphobic)
- Bullying related to disability or SEND
- **Bullying that includes sexual harassment or harmful sexual behaviour**

We use My Concern to record these forms of prejudiced based bullying by their type and report on them to the Diocese of Hereford Multi Academy Trust. This is in recognition that these groups are protected by the Equality Act 2010 because of the prejudice experienced by some groups in the wider society. We also recognise that there are others groups of children and young people who may be vulnerable to bullying including children in care, young carers or those with physical disability or mental health issues. We recognise therefore that we sometimes have to look at developing specific work or practice to prevent bullying of groups of pupils.

Some of these methods are listed in section 3.1.

2.5 Prejudiced based / hate incident

This is a one-off incident which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility, prejudice or ignorance, based on a person's perceived or actual ethnicity, gender, disability, religion, beliefs, sexual orientation or gender identity or their association with someone from one of these groups. These can also include indirect prejudice driven behaviour that is not targeted at one particular individual. The impact of

this expression of prejudice against an equality group whether intentional or not can be damaging and must therefore be responded to as a prejudice based or hate incident.

One-off incidents are not bullying, however we separately record prejudiced based incidents identified using the above definition as we recognise the impact they can have and that they could be an indicator of bullying behaviour or contribute to an environment where bullying could happen.

2.6 Image-based bullying

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, we recognise that image-based bullying is a serious safeguarding concern. This includes:

- Sharing, forwarding, or threatening to share personal images of another pupil
- Creating, manipulating, or sharing AI-generated images designed to embarrass or humiliate
- Pressuring or coercing someone to share personal images
- Using images to blackmail, threaten, or control another pupil

All incidents involving the sharing of nudes or semi-nudes (whether real, manipulated, or AI-generated) will be treated as safeguarding concerns and handled in line with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy as well as this Anti-Bullying Policy.

2.7 Bullying outside of school

We understand that bullying behaviour can take place on the way to and from school or in the wider community and can have a significant impact on a pupils' wellbeing and their ability to learn. We recognise that cyberbullying in particular can mean that a child or young person can experience bullying behaviour throughout their day and including when they are at home. Therefore, we act to prevent and respond to bullying behaviour outside of school as far as we are able to. We may seek support from the parents or the Police to help us to do this effectively.

2.8 Being proactive

Bullying can seriously damage a child's confidence, sense of self-worth and future mental health, and as a result the person being bullied can often feel that they are at fault in some way. Pupils may not realise they are being bullied because of their age or special educational need.

Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness or taking unusual absences. There may be evidence in learning patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school. These signs and symptoms may indicate other problems, but bullying is considered a possibility and will be investigated. Therefore, like other safeguarding issues, staff aim not to wait to be told of bullying

behaviour to raise their concerns. We are also aware that some groups of pupils may find it harder to report bullying behaviour than others. Wherever possible and appropriate, we will involve those who are experiencing bullying behaviour in finding the solutions.

3 Prevention of bullying

3.1 We use a range of strategies to prevent bullying behaviour:

- Our Christian values of love, courage and strength are central to life in school including policies and procedures.
- The curriculum and specifically PSHE promote social and emotional skills including those needed to work together, show empathy, build positive relationships and support for each other
- Small group interventions are used to support those who need extra help to develop their social and emotional aspects of learning
- PSHE education lessons are used to develop understanding of safety and how to stay safe
- E-safety is taught across the curriculum and through assemblies and visual reminders around the school community
- PSHE education lessons are used to develop understanding of bullying, its impact and ways to respond to bullying situations. PSHE education is also used to develop understanding of similarity and differences and the unacceptability of all forms of prejudice and bullying
- Regular whole school assemblies are also used to develop understanding of bullying, its impact and to encourage reporting
- The whole school participates in annual activities for anti-bullying week and a rolling programme of other events such as Black History Month, LGBT History Month, International Women's Day,
- The Pupil Safety Committee provides a forum for discussing any bullying issues and for the pupils to decide ways of preventing it and supporting those who are bullied.
- The values of the school and the school code of conduct is upheld at all times. All staff monitor behaviour and intervene when it becomes necessary to address friendship problems and prevent bullying from developing. Staff on playground duty will inform class teachers of any incidents.
- PSHE education specifically addresses online safety including the serious risks of sharing personal images, and how images can be manipulated or created using AI

- Our behaviour policy includes clear expectations around mobile phone use to reduce opportunities for cyberbullying
- We teach pupils about sexual harassment, what it is, and how to report it

3.2 Staff training

All staff new to the school receive a copy of this policy. There is regular training for all school staff on aspects of bullying and we take care to ensure all staff are trained to understand the different forms bullying behaviour [including cyber-bullying]. Staff are trained to identify, record and challenge prejudiced based bullying and incidents through, induction, staff meetings and PD days, staff briefings emails as well as specific CPD.

All staff receive training on:

- Different forms of bullying including cyberbullying and image-based bullying
- Sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour between pupils
- How to respond to incidents involving sharing of nudes or semi-nudes
- Recognising and responding to prejudice-based bullying
- The impact of SEND and mental health on behaviour and vulnerability to bullying

4 Strategies for responding to bullying behaviour – a whole school approach

4.1 Reporting bullying

Early identification of bullying is the most effective way of minimising bullying behaviour and the effects on the person being bullied. We also acknowledge that the pupil doing the bullying behaviour needs to understand that their behaviour is unacceptable and will need support to change their behaviour and explore the underlying reasons for bullying.

Pupils are encouraged to report any harmful or hurtful behaviour, even if they are not sure whether it is bullying. They are encouraged to report for themselves or for their friends.

They can do this through:

- Speaking to their class teacher
- Speaking to another trusted adult in the school
- Speaking to a parent/other adult who may then contact the school
- Speaking to a friend and asking the friend to help tell an adult
- Speaking to a member of the school council or school safety group
- Putting a note in the worry box in the classroom
- Calling a confidential helpline such as ChildLine.
- Reporting online bullying or image-based bullying by showing a trusted adult (without fear of getting in trouble for being online)
- Using the CEOP reporting button for serious online concerns

Important: If you are being bullied online or someone has shared or is threatening to share an image of you, **do not delete the evidence**. Save or screenshot what has happened so we can use it to help you.

We encourage the children to support and look out for each other

Parents and carers must inform us if they think or know there is a problem for their own child or for another child.

4.2 Recording bullying

All incidents of bullying behaviour must be recorded. All incidents are recorded according to type and these are recorded on My Concern. Individual incidents and patterns of incidents across the school are monitored using My Concern.

This monitoring will inform the PSHE programme, curriculum planning, assemblies and awareness focus. We also record prejudiced based incidents using the same system.

4.3 Responding to bullying

All pupils have a role to play to intervene to support their peers (if it is safe to do so) and to report bullying: They can respond in the following ways

- Alert an adult in school to any concerns
- Talk to your friends about the situation
- Always tell someone. Adults will need to intervene to stop bullying behaviour
- All adults in school have a responsibility to avoid encouraging or inciting bullying behaviour and to not stand by and let someone else be harmed.

Pupils (if you have been bullied)

- If you feel able to and it is safe to do so, ask the child showing bullying behaviour to stop, ignore it, say no and walk away
- Try not to show you are upset or angry, but remember this is not your fault
- Tell a friend what is happening and ask for their support
- Tell a trusted adult in or out of school (ask a friend to go with you if it helps)
- Tell the school safety group or school council member
- Do not delete evidence of online bullying as it can be used as evidence
- It is possible the situation will take time to resolve, but unless you tell someone, we cannot help you – and we can make sure you are safe

Parents and carers

- Listen and talk to your child about the situation and discuss and agree next steps
- Contact your child's class teacher

- Monitor social networks/computer use
- Reinforce the value of good behaviour

School Staff

- Take seriously any report of bullying behaviour
- Record it on My Concern and report to Mrs France, Mrs Parry or Mrs Lacey
- Mrs France, Mrs Parry or Mrs Lacey will then investigate the bullying case with you and will:
- Speak with the person targeted for bullying behaviour and involve them in what they would like to happen next
- Speak to the pupil carrying out the bullying behaviour and find out their perspectives
- Find witnesses to explain what they saw
- Contact and involve the parents and carers of those targeted and the parents and carers of those doing the bullying behaviour
- We will (age appropriately) challenge the behaviour and ideas of the person doing the bullying and help them to understand that what they said or did was hurtful and not in line with the school's values, ethos or policies
- We will consider the intentions of the perpetrator before helping him or her develop a plan for addressing this behaviour
- will let other pupils that have witnessed the incident know that the behaviour was unacceptable and that it is being dealt with
- We will keep the target of bullying behaviour and their parents and carers informed about progress and any actions taken and a review date
- We will record on My Concern whether the incident has been resolved and whether the target and their parents or carers are satisfied with the outcome
- We will identify clear times to 'check in' with those involved (and including parents and carers) to ensure issues have been resolved.
- Where bullying behaviour is denied and evidence is hard to find, those involved will be closely observed and monitored. Any pupils who feel they are being bullied will be checked in with regularly by a designated adult.
- Keep a record of conversations and actions on My Concern

Head teacher and LAB

- Reports of bullying and prejudiced based incidents will be made by the Head teacher / Senior Teacher to the Strategic Task Group
- The Pupil Safety Committee will report on pupil questionnaire
- The Head teacher and the LAB will monitor the effectiveness of this policy in discussion with the School Council and the staff in school and will be involved in any unresolved concerns raised by pupils or parents and carers about bullying in the school community.

4.4 Interventions to support responses to bullying

As a school we are committed to ensure that those who have used bullying behaviours understand the impact of this and the unacceptability of bullying inside school and wider society.

Children are supported to:

- take responsibility for their actions.
- Understand how their behaviour has impacted on the life of the child they have bullied
- Take action to change their behaviour
- Seek to identify why they have displayed bullying behaviour

4.5 Consequences

- Sanctions by themselves are unlikely to change bullying behaviour but we may need to make decisions to keep the target of bullying behaviour safe (eg preventing a child who has used bullying behaviour from playing outside for a fixed period) or to help the child who has shown bullying behaviour learn some new skills around healthy friendships and relationships. These will be case and child-specific:
- Parents and carers of those involved will be informed of actions taken
- Records will be kept on My Concern

If the bullying behaviour is so extreme or interventions and education do not change the bullying behaviour of individuals it could result in:

- Minor fixed-term exclusion
- Major fixed-term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion

See Behaviour Policy- available on the website.

Complaints

If a parent or carer thinks the school has not resolved a complaint effectively then they should follow the school's Complaints Policy. This can be found on the school website.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This document will be monitored and evaluated regularly by the school staff, Pupil Safety Committee and the Strategic Task Group and updated to take account of new Government and local guidance, and the views of the whole school community.