Holly Grove Primary Academy

Anti-Bullying Policy 2026-2027

Policy Information

introduction

At Holly Grove Primary Academy, we are committed to providing a safe, caring, inclusive and respectful environment where every child feels valued and able to achieve their full potential. We believe that all children have the right to learn, develop and thrive without fear of intimidation, discrimination, harassment or bullying.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. We are committed to fostering a culture in which children feel confident to speak out, where concerns are listened to and acted upon promptly, and where positive relationships are actively promoted throughout the school community.

We recognise that bullying can have a significant impact on children's emotional wellbeing, self-esteem, attendance, engagement and achievement. We also recognise that some incidents of bullying may constitute a safeguarding concern and may require action in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

This policy should be read alongside the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy, Child-on-Child Abuse Policy, Online Safety Policy, RSHE Policy, Equality Information and Objectives, Staff Code of Conduct and Complaints Policy.

Legal Framework

This policy has been developed with regard to the following legislation and guidance:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2026)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (Department for Education)
- Behaviour in Schools
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation

Aims and Objectives

The aims of this policy are to provide a safe and secure environment in which all pupils can learn and thrive, to promote positive relationships founded on kindness, respect and inclusion, and to establish clear procedures for preventing, reporting and responding to bullying.

We seek to create an environment in which all children understand that bullying is unacceptable, know how to seek support when concerns arise and develop the confidence to stand up for themselves and others. Through the curriculum and wider school culture, we aim to equip children with the knowledge, understanding and resilience needed to form positive relationships throughout their lives.

In particular, we aim to:

- provide a safe and secure environment in which all pupils can learn and thrive;
- promote positive relationships founded on kindness, respect and inclusion;
- establish clear procedures for preventing, reporting and responding to bullying; and
- ensure that all pupils feel listened to, supported and protected.

What is Bullying?

The Department for Education defines bullying as:

"Behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally."

Bullying is usually characterised by three key features:

- deliberate intent to hurt another person;
- repeated behaviour over time; and
- an imbalance of power which makes it difficult for the victim to defend themselves.

Whilst bullying is generally characterised as repeated behaviour over time, the school recognises that some serious incidents, particularly those involving discriminatory language, prejudice-based behaviour, online abuse, image-based abuse or safeguarding concerns, may be treated with the same seriousness as bullying, even where a single incident has occurred.

Bullying can have a lasting impact on a child's confidence, wellbeing, emotional health and ability to engage fully with learning. For this reason, all concerns are taken seriously and investigated carefully, even where a situation does not fully meet the definition of bullying.

Bullying is different from occasional friendship difficulties, disagreements or isolated incidents of unkind behaviour. However, such incidents will still be addressed through the school's Behaviour Policy and restorative approaches.

Forms of Bullying

Bullying can manifest itself in different ways and may occur face-to-face, through digital technology or through a combination of both. Understanding the different forms that bullying can take helps pupils, staff and parents recognise concerns at an early stage.

Physical Bullying

Physical bullying includes behaviours such as hitting, kicking, pushing, spitting, tripping, damaging belongings or any other form of physical intimidation.

Verbal Bullying

Verbal bullying includes name-calling, insults, offensive remarks, threats, taunting, ridicule or deliberate humiliation.

Emotional or Relational Bullying

Emotional bullying includes deliberately excluding others, spreading rumours, manipulating friendships, intimidation, embarrassment or behaviour intended to undermine a child's self-esteem and wellbeing.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying includes the use of technology to deliberately upset, intimidate or harm another person. This may involve the use of mobile phones, text messages, social media, online gaming platforms, messaging applications, email or image-sharing services.

Examples may include abusive or threatening messages, sharing images without permission, impersonating another person online, creating fake accounts, spreading rumours electronically, anonymous harassment or deliberately excluding others from online activities.

The school recognises that technology continues to evolve and that children may be exposed to emerging risks online. These include the misuse of artificial intelligence, manipulated or AI-generated images, deepfake content and other forms of image-based abuse. Such behaviour will always be taken seriously and may constitute a safeguarding concern.

The school may take action in relation to behaviour that occurs outside of school where that behaviour affects the welfare, safety or education of pupils, damages relationships within the school community or impacts upon the orderly running of the school. Where cyberbullying is identified, the school will work with pupils, parents, carers and, where appropriate, external agencies to address the concern and prevent further harm.

Prejudice-Based Bullying

The school recognises that some bullying behaviour is motivated by prejudice, discrimination or intolerance. Such incidents may relate to race, religion or belief, disability, special educational needs, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, medical conditions or any other aspect of an individual's identity.

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the school will not tolerate bullying related to disability, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or any other protected characteristic.

Prejudice-based incidents are particularly serious because they undermine the values of equality, dignity and respect that the school seeks to promote. All prejudice-based incidents will be challenged, recorded, investigated and addressed appropriately. The school will take all reasonable steps to promote understanding, prevent recurrence and ensure that those affected feel safe and supported.

Recognising Possible Signs of Bullying

A child may indicate through their behaviour that they are being bullied. Whilst these signs do not necessarily mean that bullying is taking place, staff and parents should be alert to changes in behaviour that may indicate a child requires support.

Possible signs may include:

- reluctance to attend school;
- unexplained injuries or damaged belongings;
- becoming withdrawn, anxious or distressed;
- a deterioration in academic performance;
- changes in friendship groups;
- frequent complaints of illness;
- changes in behaviour at home or school;
- loss of confidence or self-esteem; and
- sudden changes in mood or emotional wellbeing.

Staff remain vigilant to changes in behaviour, presentation, attendance or emotional wellbeing that may indicate that a pupil is experiencing bullying or another safeguarding concern.

Bullying and Safeguarding

The school recognises that bullying can sometimes be an indicator of wider safeguarding concerns.

In line with current safeguarding guidance, harmful behaviour will never be dismissed as “banter”, “part of growing up” or “just having a laugh” where a child is being harmed or placed at risk.

Some incidents may constitute child-on-child abuse and require a safeguarding response. In such cases, the welfare of the child will remain paramount and concerns will be managed in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

Concerns involving sexual harassment, sexual violence, harmful sexual behaviour, exploitation, coercive behaviour, discriminatory abuse, serious intimidation or persistent harassment will be managed through the school's safeguarding processes and, where necessary, referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Where appropriate, the school will work with Children's Social Care, the Police and other relevant agencies to safeguard pupils and reduce the risk of further harm.

Bullying Beyond the School Day

The school recognises that bullying does not always occur on school premises. It may take place on journeys to and from school, within the local community or through online platforms used outside school hours.

Where incidents occurring outside school have an impact upon a pupil's safety, wellbeing or education, the school will take appropriate action in accordance with the Behaviour Policy and safeguarding procedures.

The school will work closely with parents, carers and external agencies where necessary to address concerns and support pupils effectively.

Preventing Bullying and Raising Awareness

The most effective way to address bullying is to create a school culture in which bullying is less likely to occur.

At Holly Grove Primary Academy, promoting kindness, respect and inclusion is a shared responsibility and forms an integral part of daily school life. Pupils are taught about positive relationships, equality, diversity, online safety and mutual respect through assemblies, PSHE, RSHE, collective worship and wider curriculum opportunities.

Positive behaviour is recognised and celebrated throughout the school. Staff act as positive role models and consistently reinforce expectations around kindness, empathy, tolerance and respect.

The school participates in Anti-Bullying Week and regularly promotes key messages through assemblies, classroom activities and pupil-led discussions. Pupils are encouraged to celebrate differences, challenge prejudice appropriately and understand the impact their actions may have on others.

Children are encouraged to seek support for themselves or their peers whenever concerns arise and are reminded that reporting bullying is always the right thing to do.

Procedures for Reporting Bullying

Any pupil who feels they are being bullied, or who is concerned about another pupil, should speak to a trusted adult as soon as possible. This may include a class teacher, teaching assistant, member of the pastoral team, senior leader or the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Parents and carers are encouraged to contact the school if they have concerns regarding bullying. Concerns may be raised through the class teacher, a member of the leadership team or the Headteacher.

All reports of bullying will be taken seriously. Pupils will never be discouraged from reporting concerns and no child will be made to feel that they are overreacting by seeking help.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

The school believes that the successful prevention and resolution of bullying relies upon strong partnerships between home and school.

Parents and carers are encouraged to report concerns promptly and work collaboratively with the school to resolve issues. They can support the school's anti-bullying ethos by promoting respectful behaviour, encouraging children to speak openly about concerns and reinforcing messages about online safety and positive relationships.

The school is committed to maintaining open communication with families and ensuring that concerns are addressed fairly, sensitively and promptly.

Responding to Bullying Incidents

All allegations of bullying will be investigated thoroughly, fairly and sensitively. The nature of the response will depend upon the circumstances of the incident, the age of the pupils involved and the impact upon those affected.

The school's priority will always be to ensure the safety, wellbeing and dignity of pupils whilst resolving concerns effectively and preventing any recurrence.

Investigations may include speaking with pupils individually, gathering information from staff, reviewing records and considering any available evidence.

Where appropriate, parents and carers will be informed and involved in supporting a resolution. Responses may include restorative discussions, behaviour support, increased supervision, pastoral intervention, sanctions in line with the Behaviour Policy, referral to outside agencies or safeguarding action where required.

Each incident will be considered on its own merits, with decisions made in the best interests of the children involved.

Wherever appropriate, the school will seek to use restorative approaches to help pupils understand the impact of their actions, repair relationships and move forward positively.

Supporting Pupils

The school recognises that effective anti-bullying practice requires support for all pupils involved.

Pupils who have experienced bullying will be listened to, reassured and supported appropriately. This may include pastoral support, emotional wellbeing interventions, friendship support, increased monitoring and regular opportunities to speak with trusted adults.

Pupils who have displayed bullying behaviour will also be supported to understand the impact of their actions, take responsibility for their behaviour and develop more positive ways of interacting with others. The school will work closely with families to promote lasting behavioural change and positive relationships.

Supporting Pupils with SEND

The school recognises that children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) may be disproportionately affected by bullying and can face additional barriers when recognising, resisting or reporting concerns.

Staff will take account of a child's individual communication, developmental and learning needs when investigating concerns and providing support. The school will seek to ensure that all pupils are able to express their views and access appropriate help.

Additional adjustments and support will be provided where necessary to ensure that pupils with SEND feel safe, included and supported within the school environment. This may include adapted communication methods, additional adult support, targeted pastoral interventions or liaison with external professionals where appropriate.

Pupil Voice

Listening to pupils is an essential part of creating a safe and inclusive school environment. The school actively seeks pupils' views regarding relationships, behaviour, safety and wellbeing.

Pupil views may be gathered through:

- School Council meetings;
- pupil questionnaires and surveys;
- class discussions;

- wellbeing activities; and
- safeguarding activities.

Feedback from pupils helps the school to evaluate its practice, identify emerging concerns and strengthen preventative strategies.

Recording and Monitoring

Accurate recording and monitoring of bullying incidents enables the school to identify patterns, evaluate the effectiveness of preventative measures and ensure that pupils receive appropriate support.

All incidents of bullying will be recorded using the school's agreed recording systems and procedures, including CPOMS where appropriate. Records will be reviewed regularly by senior leaders and the Designated Safeguarding Lead to identify trends, recurring concerns, vulnerable groups and any emerging patterns that may require additional intervention.

This information will inform school improvement planning, safeguarding practice and future preventative work.

Recording Prejudice-Related Incidents

Any racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, disability-related or other prejudice-based incident will be recorded and investigated, regardless of whether the behaviour meets the definition of bullying.

The school will monitor such incidents carefully to identify patterns, support affected pupils and ensure that all members of the school community feel safe, respected and included.

Monitoring and Review

The Governing Board will receive anonymised information regarding bullying incidents, trends and patterns through safeguarding and behaviour reports. Governors will use this information to monitor the effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying strategies and to ensure that statutory responsibilities are being met.

The Headteacher and Governing Board will review the effectiveness of this policy regularly and ensure that appropriate action is taken where concerns are identified.

Through ongoing monitoring and review, Holly Grove Primary Academy seeks to ensure that its anti-bullying practice remains effective, responsive and reflective of current safeguarding guidance. The school is committed to continuous improvement and to maintaining an environment in which every child feels safe, respected, included and able to thrive.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required by changes to legislation, statutory guidance or local circumstances.

Linked Policies

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Child-on-Child Abuse Policy
- Behaviour Policy

- Online Safety Policy
- RSHE Policy
- Equality Information and Objectives
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy

Commitment Statement

Holly Grove Primary Academy is committed to fostering a culture of kindness, respect, inclusion and belonging, where difference is celebrated, diversity is valued and every member of the school community is treated with dignity.

Through education, positive relationships and a shared commitment to safeguarding, we strive to ensure that every child feels safe, supported and able to flourish both academically and personally. We want every child to attend school feeling valued, respected and confident that their voice will be heard and their wellbeing protected.

Date Ratified by Governors Autumn 2026
Review day Autumn 2027