

The Guild Hall School

Anti-Bullying Policy

2026 – 2028



Reference:	GH Antibullying V001 August26
Reviewed by:	Sariena Watkins
Review Date:	01.08.2026
Date of next review:	September 2028



Curiosity – Courage - Community

We believe in providing trauma-informed, therapeutic care. Where children and young people feel safe, valued and understood. We nurture Trust, emotional growth and resilience compassionate, consistent and relationship-led support.

C = *Curiosity and a bias for action fuel our innovation.*

A = *Accountability to those we serve help us deliver results.*

R = *Respect and Integrity are demonstrated in our actions.*

E = *Engaged and passionate employees define our company.*

Introduction

All children, young people, and adults have the right to learn and work in an environment free from harassment and bullying. This statement aligns with the general principles found in international human rights and educational policies, such as those outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Policy Statement

This policy promotes a culture where everyone has a responsibility to tackle bullying behaviour promptly, effectively and sensitively. It demonstrates our dedication to providing a safe, inclusive communication and learning environment for each individual child and young person. We are committed to providing a safe, positive and inclusive environment where every child feels valued, respected and free from bullying. We understand that our pupils have a wide range of communication and learning needs, and we take additional steps to ensure the voices of all children – including non-verbal pupils – are heard and safeguarded.

Legal framework and guidance

This policy adheres to relevant regulations and legislation, including:

- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- Independent School Standards (Guidance for independent schools) updated April 2019)
- Equality Act 2010
- Education Act 2011
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Positive environments where children can flourish, Ofsted Guidance (2021)
- Behaviour in Schools (2022) DFE Guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, (KCSIE) 2026
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation (July 2022) DFE Guidance

In implementing this policy, team members must ensure that no pupil involved in bullying is disadvantaged based on communication differences, traits and needs, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion, or belief.



Policy framework

This policy aligns with our broad and overarching strategies to embed a positive, proactive, person-centred culture which is built on therapeutic and trauma-informed practices. We use consistent, fair and inclusive boundaries, particularly through natural and logical consequences, and restorative approaches to help children and young people learn and prepare for a safe future. This policy should also be read and implemented alongside the following policies:

- School Safeguarding Policy
- Child-on-Child Abuse Policy
- Staying Safe Online
- School Mobile & Smart Technology Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Suspension and Exclusions Policy
- Complaints Policy

What is bullying behaviour?

The Guild Hall School recognises that our children and young people have diverse needs and experiences, that often include trauma and neurodivergence, which may influence behaviour. Our overall behaviour policy and positive ethos seek to understand and address underlying needs, supporting our children and young people appropriately. For this policy, bullying behaviour is defined as: Actions or words that are hurtful, repeated over time, and difficult for the affected individual/s to defend against, often involving a power imbalance.

Bullying can take on many different formats, but often take the form of one of four main types of bullying behaviours:

- Physical: Hitting, kicking, taking belongings, aggression
- Verbal: Name-calling, insulting, offensive remarks, including sexual nature
- Indirect: Spreading rumours, social exclusion, sending malicious emails
- Cyber: Malicious emails or texts, inappropriate persistent messaging and images via social networking.
- Bullies may use these behaviours on their own or combine multiple types of bullying together. Bullying behaviour can include one or more of the above types, and can also be, but is not limited to:
- Emotional: Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g., hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Interference with others' possessions: Causing damage to someone else's property
- Comments that can be perceived as racist: Racial taunts, gestures
- Sexualised Comments and Behaviour: Unwanted physical contact, sexually abusive comments
- LGBTQ+: E.g., Focusing on sexuality or gender identity
- Special Educational Needs & Protected Characteristics: E.g., Targeting learning or physical disabilities

Behaviour that typifies bullying is a form of child-on-child abuse that can cause significant distress. Furthermore, it can serve to re-traumatise students with past bullying and/or abusive experiences. No one deserves bullying behaviour, and everyone has the right to be respected.

Signs and Symptoms

Staff should be aware of signs indicating a student may be experiencing bullying behaviour and investigate if a pupil:

- Does not want to come to school
- Changes their routine
- Begins to not attend for no apparent reason
- Becomes withdrawn or lacks confidence
- Is reluctant to speak to peers or teachers
- Experiences a deterioration in mental health
- Runs away from home
- Is upset at night or has disruptive sleep patterns and nightmares
- Complains of feeling unwell in the morning and at school
- Shows a downturn in academic performance and/or their engagement
- Has torn, damaged, or missing possessions and clothes



- Asks for or steals money (to pay a bully)
- Shows unexplained bruises or cuts
- Stops eating.
- Displays aggressive or disruptive behaviour
- Starts demonstrating bullying behaviour towards other peers or family members.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems; bullying behaviour should be considered and investigated as part of a wider picture of possible causes.

Our approach and response to bullying

We are proactive to prevent bullying behaviour from happening and responsive when bullying occurs. Children and young people are supported to communicate and be heard is at the heart of our integrated practice. All individuals who are affected can suffer harm, whether they are on the receiving end, presenting with bullying behaviour or witnessing the behaviour. It is important all individuals get the support that they need to stop this from happening and address the harmful impact.

Child-on-child abuse and criminal behaviour

Bullying that constitutes child-on-child abuse (including sexual harassment or violence) will be managed under the Child-on-Child Abuse Policy and KCSIE guidance. Where behaviour may be criminal, the school will consider and, where appropriate, make a referral to the police. All such decisions will be recorded and parents/carers informed unless doing so would place a child at further risk.

Responsibilities

The Headteacher has a legal duty under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to prevent bullying. The

Headteacher will:

- Promote the Bayleaf ethos and values in developing strategies which embed a positive and proactive culture.
- Ensure team members discuss and review the whole school strategies.
- Discuss whole school strategy development with the Senior Leadership Team.
- Ensure team members are appropriately trained.

Senior/Middle Leaders will:

- Manage policies and systems day-to-day.
- Ensure positive strategies and procedures are being implemented.
- Inform the Headteacher of bullying behaviour incidents.
- Involve parents/carers and affected individual/s of bullying behaviour in solutions.
- Implement the school's overarching strategies.

- Teachers and support staff will:
- Liaise with SLT around any bullying behaviour incidents.
- Be involved in identifying, implementing and reviewing strategies to achieve solutions.

Designated Safeguarding Lead and escalation:

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for bullying and child-on-child abuse is Sariena Watkins (Headteacher).

- All staff must report bullying incidents that meet the threshold for child-on-child abuse to the DSL immediately.
- Where an incident indicates a safeguarding concern, the DSL will follow the school's Safeguarding Policy and KCSIE guidance, and will make referrals to children's social care and/or the police where appropriate.
- The DSL will ensure that any multi-agency actions are recorded and followed up.



Bullying Behaviour Outside School Premises

The school will investigate bullying behaviour incidents outside of school when reported and when they involve school pupils. The school will challenge this outside of school premises to an extent as is reasonable. Parents will be informed, and the police may be notified if the incident is criminal or poses a serious threat.

Off-site and online incidents

For off-site or online incidents involving school pupils, the school will:

- assess immediate risk to any pupil;
- inform parents/carers;
- liaise with other providers or schools;
- consider police referral for criminal activity;
- apply school sanctions where appropriate.
- Online incidents will be managed in line with the relevant Staying Safe Online and Technology policies.

Preventing bullying

Our positive, person-centred culture is proactive and helps reduce bullying. Other anti-bullying specific strategies include:

- Clear school values, expectations and definitions around bullying behaviour
- Participation in Anti-Bullying Behaviour Week to raise awareness
- Regular classroom discussions during tutor time, e.g. co-reflect
- Related topics being part of the school curriculum e.g. PSHE
- Assemblies which focus on bullying behaviour and related topics
- Regular staff training around bullying behaviour and related topics
- Mentoring programs to support emotional and social wellbeing
- Anonymous reporting systems and surveys
- Utilising support services to meet the needs of individuals and work with schools at a universal level
- Parent engagement and workshops
- Good monitoring and supervision of students
- Strong leadership and pupil council involvement
- Peer mediation where social issues arise
- Psychoeducation on bullying behaviour
- Vigilance during high-risk times (before/after school, break, lunch, and lesson changes)

Accessible information and reasonable adjustments

Information about bullying, reporting routes and support will be available in accessible formats (Widgit symbols, Makaton, visual stories, large print and audio). Staff will make reasonable adjustments to enable non-verbal pupils and those with communication needs to report incidents (e.g., use of communication aids, one-to-one support, visual reporting cards).

Responses to bullying and the use of interventions

To address bullying behaviour, the school will:

- Handle all incidents sensitively, consistently, and urgently.
- Ensure safety for the affected individual/s immediately.
- Follow safeguarding procedures.
- Remind all involved what bullying behaviour is and our values and expectations.
- Find and address the underlying need behind bullying behaviour.
- Use restorative principles, including affected individual awareness and impact.
- Support peer mediation where appropriate and possible.
- Provide solution-focused tools to stop bullying behaviour. • Consequences to bullying behaviour need to be linked to the behaviour and will be natural, logical, firm and supportive.



- Exclusion is a very last resort as we recognise it is rarely in the child's best interests. However, on occasion, we may exclude individuals for bullying behaviour as a safety measure to protect others within the school community.
- Provide individual support where needed e.g., to address the emotional and social impact of bullying behaviour or help individuals to develop new skills.
- Involve parents/carers by keeping them informed and/or involving them further in the process
- Consider the needs of any witnesses to bullying behaviour
- Seek support/involvement from support services where necessary, including the school's clinical team, social care services and police services.
- Record and address it, no matter how minor the incident.

Sanctions, restorative practice and recording

Consequences for bullying are proportionate, linked to behaviour plans and recorded in the incident log. Restorative approaches are the preferred response; however, where safety requires, fixed-term suspension or permanent exclusion may be used as a last resort and will be recorded and reported in line with the Suspensions and Exclusions Policy.

Monitoring of Bullying Incidents

Bullying behaviour incidents are tracked through our online recording systems, with trends and patterns analysed regularly. Surveys for pupils and staff provides feedback to improve our anti-bullying work. We also use other data to inform their monitoring of bullying/potential bullying, recording and sharing information around observations made, and information gathered, on a day-to-day basis. All bullying incidents are logged on the Bullying Incidents Tracker.

Recording, retention and access

All bullying incidents are recorded on CPOMS and our Bullying Incidents Tracker. Records include: date/time, location, persons involved, witnesses, description of incident, actions taken, outcomes and follow-up. Records are retained in line with the Data Protection and Records Retention Policy. Access to records is restricted to DSL, SLT and authorised staff; records will be shared with external agencies only where lawful and necessary.

Communication of our Anti-Bullying Policy

We ensure understanding of bullying behaviour and responses through:

- Communicating this policy to parents/carers, pupils, staff, and governors.
- Lessons and assemblies.
- Induction programs for new pupils.
- Regular reminders about School Values.
- Pupils will be encouraged to report bullying and support their peers.

Procedures for parents

If parents suspect bullying behaviour, they should:

- Contact the class teacher and provide details.
- Allow the school to investigate.
- Encourage their child to speak to a teacher or other trusted staff member.

Parental communication timescales

When the school substantiates a bullying incident, parents/carers of the affected pupil(s) will be informed within 24 hours by telephone or in person and will receive written confirmation of the actions and outcomes within 5 working days, unless safeguarding considerations require a different approach. The school will keep parents updated on progress and any further actions.



Procedures for pupils

If pupils think they or someone else is presenting with bullying behaviour, they must:

- Tell an adult, parent, teacher, or staff member.
- Be prepared to be asked about the bullying behaviour and its effects.
- Report witnessed or suspected bullying behaviour.

The complex needs of our young people might make it hard for them to recognise bullying behaviour and/or communicate it to others. The importance of team members recognising direct and indirect indicators are important here. It is also important that our young people are offered opportunities to communicate freely using their communication aids. We will include visual support using Widgit symbols to aid understanding and access to this Anti-Bullying Policy. We acknowledge that non-verbal children may communicate bullying through:

- Changes in mood or behaviour
- Avoidance of specific peers or areas
- Increased anxiety or stimming
- Using symbols or assistive devices to express distress

Procedures for staff

In cases of reported or suspected bullying behaviour, staff will:

- Provide reassurance to those involved that it will be addressed and that the emotional, social and physical safety of all involved is the initial priority (where bullying behaviour has been disclosed by pupil/s).
- Respond immediately or, if an individual's safety is not at risk, refer to the pupil's class teacher.
- Pass details to a member of SLT and DSL.
- Agree on a plan of action to support pupils.

The Leadership Team (Pastoral Lead) will:

- Log incidents, with actions and outcomes.
- Record incidents that relate to protected characteristics (e.g., homophobic, racism).
- Interview the affected individual/s in a non-shaming way that will enable them to share and inform their parents in a supportive and factual way that recognises underlying need.
- Develop a supportive plan for all parties involved, that is in line with the School's Behaviour Policy
- Support and address behaviour through support plans and interventions

Supporting Pupils

Pupils who have experienced bullying behaviour and who demonstrate bullying behaviour will receive:

- Immediate opportunities to discuss the experience – to increase understanding for all.
- Reassurance and continuous support from a designated team member.
- Restoration of self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Referral to the Pastoral Team if needed.
- Time with a key trusted adult or learning mentor
- Support and advice to parents/carers.
- Information about the investigation outcome.
- Involvement from support services where necessary.
- Symbol-based reflection activities
- Social stories or comic strip conversations
- Restorative approaches adapted for SEND
- Review of the pupil's EHCP or behaviour plan



EHCP and provision review

If bullying adversely affects a pupil's progress, wellbeing or safety, the school will review the pupil's EHCP, behaviour plan or support plan and convene a multi-disciplinary meeting where appropriate. Any changes to provision will be recorded and communicated to parents/carers and relevant professionals.

Natural and logical consequences

Pupils who demonstrate bullying behaviour will be supported in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy. Their behaviour will be responded to with logical consequences to help develop victim empathy, to help support learning and ultimately a change in behaviour. Persistent issues may lead to suspensions and exclusion as a last resort to protect the safety and well-being of the whole community (Please see the Suspensions and Exclusion Policy).

Complaints

If a parent/carer/ those with parental responsibility is dissatisfied with the school's response to a bullying behaviour incident, they may follow the school's Complaints Policy.

Monitoring, review and evaluation

This policy was developed with interdisciplinary team consultation and student input. We will review this policy at least every two years to assess its implementation and effectiveness.

Evaluation and governance oversight

The school evaluates anti-bullying effectiveness through termly pupil and staff surveys, focus groups and the pupil council. Bullying trends and actions are reported termly to the governing body/trust. All staff receive anti-bullying and child-on-child abuse training at induction and annually; training records are held by HR.

Useful organisations

Local services and referral pathways

The school works with local CAMHS, educational psychology, social care and community providers. Contact details and referral thresholds are held in the Safeguarding folder and are available to staff on request with useful information links below for further guidance and support.

- ❖ www.childline.org.uk - get help and advice about a wide range of issues, talk to a counsellor online, send ChildLine an email or post on the message boards.
- ❖ www.cybermentors.org.uk - A social networking place where you can find out about bullying and what you can do about it and also talk to mentors your own age. www.bullying.co.uk - bullying at work, cyberbullying, and find out how you can deal with it from leading bullying organisation Bullying UK.
- ❖ www.need2know.co.uk/beatbullying/ - Helpful articles on how to deal with issues around bullying.
- ❖ www.antibullying.net/ - The Anti-Bullying Network is an independent operation with the following objectives:
 - to support anti-bullying work in schools;
 - to provide a free website;
 - and to offer an anti-bullying service which will include the provision of training, publications and consultancy services.
- ❖ www.ypas.org.uk - committed to supporting young people aged 10 to 25 years in a safe environment with a primary focus on respect and acceptance.
- ❖ www.education-otherwise.org - a UK charity offering information and support to home educating families.
- ❖ www.cruelatschool.co.uk - website aimed at other families whose children are or have been bullied at school.
- ❖ www.cctvcameraworld.com/what-is-cyberbullying-and-how-to-prevent-it.html