



Axbridge C of E Academy

Together We Inspire, Thrive & Excel

Anti-Bullying Policy

Date of Policy: September 2026

Review Date: September 2028



Anti-Bullying Policy

Our vision and ethos

At Axbridge Church of England Academy, all policies and practices are rooted in our Christian vision and ethos. Our work as a school community is guided by the words of Jesus:

"I have come so that you may have life, life in all its fullness." John 10:10

This vision underpins our commitment to enabling every child and adult to flourish academically, socially, emotionally, spiritually and morally, within a safe, inclusive and aspirational learning environment.

Our Christian values of Community, Love and Courage shape the way we live and work together each day. Through Community, we foster belonging, partnership and mutual respect. Through Love, we promote kindness, compassion, dignity and forgiveness. Through Courage, we encourage honesty, resilience and the confidence to speak up and do what is right, even when it is difficult.

Together We Inspire, Thrive & Excel

1. Purpose and aims

Bullying is unacceptable and can have a significant impact on a child's safety, wellbeing, attendance, relationships and learning. We therefore work proactively to prevent bullying, respond consistently when concerns are raised and make sure that children know how to seek help.

- create a safe, inclusive culture in which every child is treated with dignity and respect;
- help pupils understand what bullying is, what it is not, and how to report concerns;
- respond promptly and proportionately to bullying and other harmful behaviour;
- recognise when bullying may also constitute child-on-child abuse, discrimination or another safeguarding concern;
- support the child who has experienced bullying and address the behaviour and underlying needs of the child who has displayed bullying behaviour;
- work in partnership with parents/carers and relevant agencies;
- record, monitor and review incidents so that patterns are identified and preventative action is taken.

2. What is bullying?

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, which intentionally hurts another person or group physically or emotionally. Bullying often involves an imbalance of power. That imbalance may be physical, psychological, social or technological, and bullying may take place face-to-face or online.

Not every disagreement, friendship difficulty or unkind act is bullying. However, all harmful behaviour will be taken seriously. A serious one-off incident may constitute abuse, harassment, discrimination or a safeguarding concern and does not need to be repeated before the school acts.



3. Bullying and safeguarding

Bullying can be a form of child-on-child abuse. Bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying, may therefore constitute a safeguarding concern.

Where behaviour indicates that a child has suffered, or may be at risk of suffering, harm, staff will follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and report the concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).

Staff will challenge inappropriate behaviour between children and will not dismiss harmful behaviour as "banter", "having a laugh" or simply part of growing up. Sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour, threatening behaviour and discriminatory abuse will be responded to in accordance with safeguarding procedures where appropriate.

4. Forms of bullying

Bullying may include, but is not limited to:

- **Physical:** hitting, kicking, pushing, damaging or taking belongings, or other physical intimidation.
- **Verbal:** name-calling, taunting, threats, mocking, insulting or offensive comments.
- **Relational or social:** deliberate exclusion, spreading rumours, manipulating friendships, humiliation or encouraging others to isolate someone.
- **Online/cyberbullying:** harmful behaviour through social media, messaging services, group chats, online games, websites, images, video, smart devices or other digital technology. This may include abusive messages, deliberate exclusion, impersonation, sharing embarrassing or manipulated images, or harmful AI-generated content.
- **Prejudice-based or discriminatory:** bullying relating to race, religion or belief, disability or SEND, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, or another protected characteristic relevant to the school context.
- **Sexist or sexual:** sexist language, sexualised comments, unwanted sexual attention, sexual harassment or other harmful sexual behaviour.
- **Appearance, health or medical needs:** bullying linked to appearance, health conditions, medical needs or perceived difference.
- **Family or home circumstances:** including bullying relating to children in care, previously looked-after children, young carers, family structure, socioeconomic circumstances or other home circumstances.

Bullying may also be based on a characteristic someone is perceived to have, or because of their association with another person.

5. Preventing bullying

We recognise that prevention is more effective than responding only after incidents occur. We develop a culture in which children understand respectful relationships, recognise bullying and feel confident to speak up for themselves and others.

- our Christian vision and the values of Community, Love and Courage;
- clear, consistent expectations for behaviour and relationships;
- PSHE/RSHE, online safety and the wider curriculum;
- explicit teaching of respectful communication, listening, disagreement and conflict resolution;

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Part of the
Wessex Learning Trust

- collective worship, assemblies and age-appropriate anti-bullying work;
- pupil voice and pupil leadership opportunities;
- staff modelling positive, respectful relationships;
- appropriate supervision and identification of potential bullying hotspots;
- teaching pupils to be active bystanders and to seek help for themselves or others;
- celebrating positive choices, kindness, responsibility and contribution to the school community.

6. Bullying outside school and online

Bullying can take place beyond the school site and outside the school day. The school may respond to bullying or harmful behaviour that occurs online, on journeys to and from school, or within the wider community where it affects the welfare of a pupil, relationships within school or the orderly running of the school.

Where appropriate, the school will work with parents/carers, other schools, the Trust, external agencies and the police. Any safeguarding concern will be managed in line with the school's safeguarding procedures.

The school's expectations regarding mobile phones, smart devices and personal communication technology are set out within its Behaviour and Online Safety arrangements. Misuse of technology to bully, harass or harm another person will be addressed under this policy and, where appropriate, safeguarding procedures.

7. Responding to concerns and incidents

All staff take concerns about bullying seriously. The response will be proportionate to the circumstances, the age and needs of the children involved, and any safeguarding considerations.

1. **Listen and reassure:** The child will be listened to carefully and taken seriously. Staff will avoid promising confidentiality and will explain what needs to happen next.
2. **Establish the facts:** Staff will gather information from relevant children and adults, taking account of the possibility of an imbalance of power or fear of retaliation.
3. **Consider safeguarding:** Where there is a concern that a child has suffered or may be at risk of harm, the matter will be referred promptly to the DSL/DDSL.
4. **Record:** Confirmed bullying incidents and significant concerns will be recorded using the school's agreed recording systems.
5. **Inform parents/carers:** Where bullying is identified or reasonably suspected, parents/carers of the children involved will normally be informed at an appropriate stage, unless doing so would place a child at increased risk of harm or conflict with safeguarding procedures.
6. **Support and address behaviour:** The child who has experienced bullying will receive appropriate support. The child who has displayed bullying behaviour will be helped to understand the impact of their actions, repair harm where appropriate and change their behaviour. Sanctions will be applied in line with the Behaviour Policy where appropriate.
7. **Follow up:** Staff will check back with the child who experienced the bullying to establish whether the behaviour has stopped and whether they feel safe. Further action will be taken where concerns remain.



8. Restorative approaches

The school uses restorative approaches to help children understand impact, rebuild relationships and make better choices. The emphasis remains on challenging the behaviour rather than labelling the child.

Restorative conversations will only be used where they are safe, appropriate and likely to benefit the children involved. They will not be an automatic response following bullying or child-on-child abuse and will never require a child who has experienced harm to meet with another child where they do not feel safe or where doing so could compound the harm experienced.

9. Recording, monitoring and follow-up

All confirmed bullying incidents will be recorded centrally on Bromcom / Edukey. Records should, where appropriate, identify:

- the nature and type of bullying;
- whether the incident involved prejudice or discrimination;
- the pupils involved;
- the time, location or online context;
- actions taken and sanctions/interventions used;
- communication with parents/carers;
- any safeguarding referral or external-agency involvement;
- support provided;
- follow-up and outcome.

Senior leaders will periodically analyse records to identify patterns involving pupils, groups, protected characteristics, locations, times of day or online contexts and will take preventative action where required. Partners will receive appropriate information to enable them to scrutinise the effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying arrangements.

10. Roles and responsibilities

Partners

- support the Headteacher in maintaining a culture in which bullying is not tolerated;
- receive appropriate information about the effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying arrangements;
- scrutinise patterns and trends, including prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying and bullying affecting vulnerable groups;
- ensure that concerns about the school's response can be considered through the Trust/school complaints arrangements.

The Headteacher and senior leaders

- implement this policy and ensure that staff understand how to identify, report and respond to bullying;
- ensure staff receive appropriate training and safeguarding updates;
- ensure children know how to seek help and how concerns will be responded to;
- maintain appropriate records and review patterns, trends and impact;



- ensure the school's preventative work remains visible across the curriculum and wider life of the school.

Teachers and support staff

- take all reports and signs of bullying seriously;
- intervene promptly when they witness harmful behaviour;
- record and report concerns in line with school procedures;
- refer safeguarding concerns to the DSL/DDSL without delay;
- support children who have experienced bullying and address the behaviour of children who have displayed bullying behaviour;
- work with parents/carers and colleagues as appropriate;
- contribute to follow-up and monitoring to ensure that concerns have been resolved.

Parents and carers

Parents/carers who are concerned that their child may be experiencing bullying, or may be displaying bullying behaviour, should contact the child's class teacher in the first instance. If concerns remain, they should contact the Headteacher. If they remain dissatisfied with the school's response, they should follow the school/Trust complaints procedure.

Parents/carers are asked to support the school's anti-bullying approach, encourage respectful behaviour and alert the school promptly to concerns, including relevant online concerns that may affect school life.

Pupils

Pupils are encouraged to tell any trusted adult if they are worried about bullying, whether it is happening to them or to someone else. They are taught that they should keep telling until someone helps.

If someone is being unkind or making you feel unsafe:

1. Say "Stop" if you feel safe to do so.
2. Move away if you can.
3. Tell a trusted adult.
4. Keep telling until someone helps.

You can always tell an adult straight away. You do not have to deal with bullying by yourself.

Pupil views about safety, relationships and bullying will be gathered through age-appropriate pupil voice, class discussion, questionnaires and other opportunities across the year.

11. Related policies, legislation and guidance

This policy should be read alongside the school's current:

- WLT Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Behaviour Policy;
- Online Safety Policy and Acceptable Use Agreements;



- WLT Equality Information and Objectives;
- PSHE/RSHE Policy;
- SEND Policy;
- Staff Code of Conduct;
- Complaints Policy.

Relevant legislation and national guidance includes:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004;
- Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026;
- Department for Education: Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;
- Department for Education: Preventing and Tackling Bullying;
- Department for Education: Behaviour in Schools;
- Department for Education: Mobile Phones in Schools (statutory guidance);
- Working Together to Safeguard Children.

12. Monitoring and review

The Headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and reports to Partners as appropriate on its effectiveness. Partners will review relevant records and information in order to identify patterns and evaluate the effectiveness of the school's preventative and responsive work.

The policy will be reviewed every two years, or earlier where there is a significant change in legislation, statutory guidance, school practice or identified need.

Policy owner	Headteacher
Approved by	Local Partners
Date adopted	September 2026
Next review	September 2028



