Anti-Bullying Policy

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Relevant guidance: Preventing and tackling bullying, 2017

Date of last review | 1 S**eptember 2025**
Date of next review | 1 S**eptember 2027**

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1 OVERVIEW

1.1 Expectations of behaviour

Every child has the right to an environment where it is **safe to learn**.

Our goal is to have a **bully-free school**. However, we are realistic and understand that there is always the possibility of bullying occurring within school and that it can happen in many different ways (see below for definitions of bullying). Our pupils have produced their own *Pupil Expectations*, which set out the principles which they want their community of learners to adopt in relation to each other as learners.

The ethos and working atmosphere at Kew House School aim to promote and instil values of respect, tolerance, and care for all. We are committed to creating a caring and positive environment for all in our community. Therefore, bullying of any kind is entirely unacceptable at our school and will not be tolerated. One of the key objectives in seeking to prevent unpleasantness and bullying is to create and sustain a supportive atmosphere in which people feel valued, able to be themselves, and free from intimidation. The importance of interpersonal relationships is highlighted in assemblies and, together with bullying specifically, plays a prominent part in the school's Individuals in Society programme.

The aim of our *Anti-Bullying Policy* is to ensure that our pupils learn in a supportive, caring, and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour which affects everyone and can result in long-term emotional and physical damage. We recognise the significant long-term, harmful, psychological effects that bullying can result in which, in extreme cases, can result in suicide. Our aim is not only to deal with incidents of bullying, but to prevent it from occurring in the first place. If bullying, including cyber bullying, does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

1.2 Aims

- Provide a caring atmosphere in school, free from threats or fear
- Develop caring attitudes between pupils
- Through training, raise staff awareness of issues of bullying and the forms it may take
- Through assemblies, PSHE via the Individuals in Society curriculum, projects, literature, and current affairs, raise pupil awareness of issues of bullying and how to deal with it
- Ensure that pupils, parents, and staff are equipped with strategies to prevent, de-escalate, and/or stop any continuation of harmful bullying taking place
- Ensure that pupils, parents, and staff are equipped with strategies to deal with bullying in a supportive, reasonable, proportionate, and consistent way
- Safeguard the pupil who experiences bullying and trigger sources of support for the pupil
- Apply disciplinary sanctions to the person causing the bullying and ensure that they learn from the experience

1.3 Objectives

- All *Directors*, teaching and support staff, pupils, and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises
- To adopt a zero-tolerance approach to bullying through raising awareness of the damaging effects of this anti-social behaviour
- As a school we take bullying seriously; pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported
- Kew House School is committed to reducing the risk of bullying through staff training and through research into problem times and locations

1.4 Wellbeing vision statement

- Kew House School will promote, develop, equip, and prepare healthy learners for life; we are committed to making it our mission to promote resilience, positive emotional and physical wellbeing, and mental health for all our pupils and staff
- We understand wellbeing to be a state of being comfortable, healthy, and happy – physically, emotionally, and mentally; we aim to drive this message forward, and to ensure that emotional wellbeing, mental health, and physical wellbeing are on a par with safeguarding, as everyone's business across the whole school community
- We believe having an emotionally, physically, and mentally healthy community is not about being happy all the time, but about working together through the challenges and sharing the celebrations; feeling supported, heard, accepted, valued, and empowered
- We will strive to create an environment that has a whole-school approach in providing excellent mental health support, understanding, and intervention
- We will put wellbeing at the heart of our school to ensure successful learning and commit to our policies reflecting this practice

2 DEFINING BULLYING

We define bullying as:

Bullying is any deliberate, intentionally hurtful, upsetting, frightening, or threatening behaviour by an individual or a group towards other people. It is often repeated over a period of time, and it is very difficult for victims to defend themselves. Bullying results in worry, fear, pain, and distress to the victim(s).

Put another way, bullying is the intentional hurting, harming, or humiliating of another person. It may take many forms, including physical (including any threat of or use of violence of any kind), sexual (including the sharing of nudes or semi-nudes), verbal (including cyber-bullying via text messages, email, social media, gaming, or other instant messages, and can include the use of images and video), and/or emotional (including by excluding, being sarcastic, name-calling, tormenting, or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone, or actions that fall short of direct participation, where someone encourages others to bully, or joins in with laughing at a victim. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidating, and often involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator(s) and the victim(s) whether that be a physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), or intellectual imbalance, or by the perpetrator(s) having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate the victim(s).

Bullying can sometimes amount to child-on-child abuse, which is abuse of one child or children against another child. It can be standalone or as part of wider abuse and can happen both inside and outside of school, and online. Further information about child-on-child abuse, including the procedures to follow when an incident of child-on-child abuse is reported, can be found in the school's *Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy*.

Bullying is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups and may involve actions or comments regarding a person's race, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), certain health conditions, or because of a child's familial circumstances (such as being adopted, in care, or having caring responsibilities). Bullying may be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time, and can involve anyone – pupils, other young people, staff, and parents.

Where an incident of bullying causes or is likely to cause significant harm to a pupil, the school will follow the procedures set out in the school's *Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy*.

More specifically, we recognise that bullying takes the form of:

Emotional	Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, and any other form of threatening, humiliating, and psychological behaviour, including comments about family, appearance, and physique
Physical	
Racist	Racial taunts and gestures
Sexual, sexist, and gender-based	Unwanted physical contact and sexist or sexually abusive comments. Comments or actions that are misogynistic or misandrist.
Abuse in personal intimate relationships	Teenage relationship abuse
Targeted behaviour on religious, faith, and cultural grounds	
Targeted homophobia or transphobia	Comments and actions focussing on the issue of sexuality
Targeted behaviour relating to Special Educational Needs and disability issues	
Verbal	Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, embarrassment, and teasing
Cyber	Misuse of email, internet chat rooms, and social website; sending mobile phone threats by text messaging, calls, videos, and photographs; misuse of associated technology, such as camera and video facilities (see our *Online Safety Policy*) – in school or offsite, during term time or holidays
Targeting of adopted pupils or pupils in care	
Prejudice-based bullying	
Any other cruel or unkind comment or action relating to an individual's disability or impairment	
Intentional damage to possessions	
Banter in any form	We do not hide behind this term as it can be used to excuse a number of behaviours listed above

It is important to understand that bullying is not the *odd occasion* of falling out with friends, name calling, or arguments, etc. However, all incidents of potential bullying are investigated, however infrequent.

Pupils sometimes fall out or say things because they are upset. When occasional problems of this kind arise, it is not necessarily classed as bullying. It is an important part of pupils' development to learn

how to deal with friendship breakdowns, rare name-calling, or occasional childish pranks. We all have to learn how to deal with these situations and develop social skills to repair relationships. This is part of the social skills and resilience pupils will need to develop as they mature.

2.1 Signs and symptoms

A pupil may indicate, by signs or behaviour, that they are being bullied.

Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:[1]

- Is frightened of walking to or from school
- Doesn't want to go on the school bus
- Begs to be driven to school
- Changes their usual routine
- Is unwilling to go to school or is school refusing
- Begins to truant, either internally within school or out of school
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens suicide, self-harms, or runs away
- Has difficulty sleeping, cries themselves to sleep at night, or has nightmares
- Feels ill in the morning
- Begins to do poorly in schoolwork
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- Has possessions which are damaged or 'go missing'
- Asks for money, starts stealing, or continually loses money
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive, or unreasonable
- Is bullying of other pupils or siblings
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- Is afraid to use the internet or their mobile phone
- Is nervous and jumpy when a cyber message is received
- Fails to produce work, produces unusually poor work, or produces work that appears to have been copied, interfered with, or spoilt by others
- Changes established habits (e.g. gives up music lessons or changes their accent / vocabulary)
- Has diminished levels of self-confidence
- Takes frequent visits to the Medical Room, with symptoms which may relate to stress or anxiety, such as stomach pains or headaches
- Is frequently absent, has erratic attendance, or is frequently late arriving to class
- Chooses the company of adults rather than peers
- Displays repressed body language and poor eye contact

Although there may be other causes of some of the above symptoms, a repetition or combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers and reported and/or recorded as appropriate, in accordance with this policy. These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

[1] Kidscape

3 PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING INCIDENTS

All staff will respond calmly and consistently to all allegations and incidents of bullying. They will be taken seriously by all staff and dealt with impartially and promptly. All those involved will have the opportunity to be heard. Staff will protect and support all pupils involved whilst allegations and incidents are investigated and resolved. Procedures for dealing with abuse by one or more pupils against another pupil are more explicitly explained in our *Behaviour Policy* and the *Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy*. Bullying will be deemed a child protection issue if the child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. If this occurs, the *Designated Safeguarding Lead* will refer the incident to the Police and/or social services.

The school will never dismiss or downplay bullying as banter or horseplay, and all reported incidents of bullying will be dealt with by staff in accordance with this policy. Staff will reassure any victim(s) that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

The school understands that bullying can be so serious that it may cause physical, emotional, and psychological damage, such as eating disorders, self-harm, and even suicide. Stopping violence and ensuring the immediate physical safety of pupils is the school's priority, however, the school acknowledges that emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical bullying, and therefore staff will use their discretion when dealing with an incident of bullying within the parameters of this policy and the *Behaviour Policy*. Whilst bullying itself is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment, sexual violence and assault, sexting, the sharing of nudes or semi-nudes (in certain circumstances), upskirting, and violent or threatening behaviour. **Nobody deserves to be a victim of bullying; everybody has the right to be treated with respect.**

The school recognises that children with SEND or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges and may be more susceptible to peer-on-peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children. The school also recognises that certain children may face additional barriers to reporting an incident because of their vulnerability, disability, sex, ethnicity, and/or sexual orientation.

Pupils who are victims of bullying will always be supported and reassured that they will be kept safe. Pupils who have engaged in bullying behaviour will be subject to appropriate disciplinary sanction and will also, where possible, be supported in learning different ways of behaving and offered support for their own circumstances, where appropriate. Where appropriate, any bystanders will be supported to reflect on their decision making and be supported to manage relationship conflict.

Bullying which occurs on school trips, online, or outside school premises will not be tolerated any more than bullying on school premises. Teachers will, where appropriate, discipline pupils for misbehaviour online, outside school premises, and/or outside school hours.

Cyber-bullying could involve communication by various forms of electronic media, including:

- Texts, instant messages, or calls on mobile phones
- The use of mobile phone camera images to cause distress, fear, or humiliation

- Posting threatening, abusive, sexual, discriminatory, offensive, or humiliating material or comments or photos on websites (including blogs, personal websites, and social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, X, Snapchat, or YouTube)
- Using email to message others in a threatening or abusive manner
- Hijacking or cloning email accounts
- Trolling
- Voting in unkind polls

The school acknowledges that cyber-bullying may take many different forms, including:

- Cyber-stalking
- Exclusion or peer rejection
- Impersonation
- Unauthorised publication of private information or images
- Encouraging derogative comments on online platforms
- Sharing nudes or semi-nudes
- Upskirting
- Sexting

The school has the right, and duty, to investigate incidents of bullying involving our pupils which take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips, online, or that otherwise occur outside of school. The school has the right to take disciplinary measures in respect of such incidents. Disciplinary measures will be taken in accordance with the school's *Behaviour Policy* and will be applied in a fair, consistent, and reasonable manner, taking into account the needs of pupils with SEND and certain health conditions, and vulnerable pupils.

3.1 The role of the *Personal Tutor*

Bullying should be a regular topic of discussion within each tutor group and will be incorporated into Individuals in Society teaching units. *Personal Tutors* should arrange discussions about bullying, emphasising the school's views about zero tolerance. Pupils should be encouraged to look out for each other and be prepared to report any concerns to a teacher, *Personal Tutor*, *Head of Year*, or *Deputy Head*. Every pupil should be reminded that the *Head* is available to support them if they feel the matter has not been dealt with properly or the bullying will not stop. Parents also have an important role to play and are strongly advised (through the *Charter for Parents*) to report any concerns over bullying, however small. Opportunities to emphasise the school's views about bullying will be made via assemblies, school broadcasts and, where appropriate, within lessons.

3.2 Whose responsibility is it to report bullying?

- The victim
- Other pupils
- Parents (even if it is not your child being bullied)
- Teaching and support staff

Sometimes, the victim may find it difficult to report the matter. Other people have a responsibility to see that the matter is raised and dealt with appropriately. **We all need to look out for each other.**

3.3 Procedures for dealing with bullying

1. Report all bullying allegations and incidents to the appropriate *Personal Tutor, Head of Year*, or other relevant members of staff as indicated in the *Charter for Pupils* and *Charter for Parents*. All pupils will be periodically reminded that if they ever feel that appropriate action is not being taken to resolve the problem, they can have immediate access to the *Head*. Parents can also have access to the *Head* if they feel appropriate action has not been taken by the *Deputy Head*.

2. Staff will make sure that the victim(s) is and feels safe.

3. Appropriate advice will be given to help the victim(s) by the *Personal Tutor* and, if necessary, the *School Counsellor*.

4. The relevant teachers will listen and speak to all pupils involved in an incident separately.

5. The problem will be identified, and possible solutions discussed with the *Deputy Head*.

6. Appropriate action will be taken quickly to end the bullying behaviour or threats of bullying.

7. Staff will reinforce that bullying is unacceptable.

8. The bully (or bullies) will be asked to sincerely apologise. Other consequences may take place and appropriate sanctions applied in line with the sanctions detailed above.

9. If possible, the pupils will be reconciled.

10. An attempt will be made, and support given, to help the bully (or bullies) understand and change their behaviour.

11. All incidents will be recorded by the *Head of Year* or *Deputy Head* in the behavioural log. Incidents of bullying (proven or otherwise) are clearly highlighted in the log.

12. In cases where we feel that bullying has occurred, parents will be informed and invited to come into school for a meeting to discuss the problem.

13. After the incident has been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

14. Bullying incidents will be discussed at *Senior Leadership Team* and other staff meetings.

15. If necessary and appropriate, the *Designated Safeguarding Lead*, social services, or Police will be consulted.

16. Exclusion will be used, at the discretion of the *Head*, for instances of severe and persistent bullying.

17. Observations of bullying from other sources will be reported to the *Deputy Head* or to the *Head*. Examples of these may include staff bullying pupils, parents bullying staff, or staff bullying staff.

18. We will use CCTV to confirm and provide evidence in the case of an incident. Access to this video evidence will be confined to the *Senior Leadership Team* and will normally only be shared with parents at their request in the case of exclusion or expulsion.

19. The *School Counsellors* will be used to support both the victim(s) and perpetrator(s).

3.4 Procedures for dealing with cyber-bullying

Where relevant, the school will follow the procedures set out in this policy and in the *Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy* for incidents of cyber-bullying, taking such disciplinary action as is considered reasonable in the circumstances, with a view to regulating pupil conduct, protecting the reputation of the school, and ensuring the welfare of its pupils.

Although cyber-bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are, however, criminal laws that may apply to communications of a harassing or threatening manner, the unauthorised publication of private images, upskirting, sharing nudes or semi-nudes, and sexting. Where the school considers that a reported incident of cyber-bullying may amount to a criminal offence, it will inform the Police.

3.5 Electronic devices

In response to an allegation of cyber-bullying, certain staff are permitted to conduct a search for electronic devices, such as a pupil's mobile phone, with the authority of the *Head* or *Deputy Head*. To undertake a search, staff do not require the consent of the pupil or their parents, provided that they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil is in possession of a prohibited item or an item that has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence, to cause personal injury, or to cause distress to any person (including the pupil being searched).

Where the member of staff undertaking the search reasonably suspects that the electronic device has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence, to cause personal injury, to cause distress to any person, or to cause damage to property, the school may examine any data or files on the device. There must be good reason to do so, such as when there has been an allegation of cyber-bullying. Parental consent to search through electronic devices is not required, but they will be informed after the event – unless doing so presents a further risk to any child.

The school may also erase any data or files from the device if the school considers there to be good reason to do so, unless there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the device may contain evidence in relation to a criminal offence. In this case, the files should not be deleted and the device must be given to the Police without delay.

4 STRATEGIES FOR THE PREVENTION AND REDUCTION OF BULLYING

Whole-school initiatives and proactive teaching strategies are used throughout the school to develop a positive learning environment with the aim of reducing the opportunities for bullying to occur.

These can include:

- Involving the whole school community in writing and reviewing the *Anti-Bullying Policy*
- Lessons as part of the IS curriculum
- Engaging in shared discussion during whole-staff meetings aimed at identifying any deteriorating relationships between pupils that could result in bullying
- Each member of staff performing a school duty to be aware of potential areas and situations in which bullying could occur
- Each tutor group agreeing on their own set of class rules and understanding or definition of bullying
- Raising awareness through anti-bullying assemblies
- Setting up of a *circle of friends* support network where a small group of pupils volunteer to help and support an individual experiencing difficulties
- Engaging in creative activities, such as:
    - Pupils writing and/or reading stories and poems about bullying
    - Using drama activities and role-plays to help pupils be more assertive and teach them strategies to help them deal with bullying situations
- Encouraging the whole school community to model appropriate behaviour towards one another
- Organising anti-bullying training for all staff
- Holding peer mentoring training for Sixth Form students to help support younger pupils
- Organising an annual 'Safer Internet' day
- Using CCTV as a deterrent and monitoring system

This *Anti-Bullying Policy* is available to all pupils and parents via our website or the School Office.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our *Online Safety Policy*, *Behaviour Policy*, and *Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy*.

5 MONITORING AND REVIEW

The school will record all incidents of reported bullying in accordance with this policy.

The *Head* or a designated member of the *Senior Leadership Team* will review all incidents of reported bullying to help identify patterns of behaviour, so that the school can take appropriate steps to address bullying behaviours within the school. Records of bullying incidents will also be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying procedures and to highlight any necessary amendments.