Anti-Bullying Policy
2026-27

Approved by	Evolve Academy Council / Governing Body
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1. Policy statement and ethos

Evolve Academy is committed to providing a safe, respectful, inclusive and nurturing environment in which every pupil can learn, develop and participate without fear of bullying, harassment, intimidation or discrimination.

Our approach is rooted in the academy strapline, “Second Chances, Strong Futures”. We combine clear behavioural expectations and accountability with restorative, relational and CPI-aligned practice. Bullying is never excused by need, diagnosis, trauma or circumstance; however, our response will seek to understand what has happened, protect those affected, address underlying needs and support sustained behaviour change.

Bullying is unacceptable in all forms, whether face-to-face, relational, prejudice-related, sexual, online or AI-enabled. We will act promptly where concerns are raised and will treat safeguarding concerns in accordance with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

2. Purpose, scope and objectives

This policy applies to all pupils across Evolve Academy's provisions and to bullying that:

- takes place on academy premises;
- occurs during academy activities, trips, transport or off-site provision;
- takes place online or outside academy where it has an impact on a pupil's safety, wellbeing, attendance, relationships or education at Evolve;
- involves prejudice, harassment or child-on-child abuse; or
- is reported to the academy by a pupil, parent/carer, member of staff or other professional.

The objectives of this policy are to:

- prevent bullying through a consistent whole-academy culture of respect, inclusion and early intervention;
- give pupils clear, accessible routes for reporting concerns and confidence that they will be listened to;
- ensure staff recognise, record, investigate and respond to concerns consistently;
- support pupils who experience bullying and monitor whether it has stopped;
- help pupils who display bullying behaviour understand impact, repair harm where appropriate and change behaviour;
- ensure responses are proportionate, safeguarding-led and take account of SEND, SEMH and other vulnerabilities;
- embed pupil voice through Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, Student Council/Pupil Voice and regular surveys; and
- use data, pupil voice and case review to improve prevention, staff training and academy systems.

3. What we mean by bullying

At Evolve Academy, bullying is understood as behaviour by an individual or group that is deliberately hurtful, is repeated or has the potential to be repeated over time, and involves a real or perceived imbalance of power.

Important distinction: Not every conflict, argument, one-off insult, fight or friendship difficulty is bullying. One-off incidents can still be serious, harmful, discriminatory, abusive or a safeguarding concern and will be responded to under the appropriate academy policy.

A power imbalance may arise from, for example:

- physical strength or size;
- age, status, popularity or group membership;
- social influence or access to information;
- online reach, anonymity or control of images/content;
- disability, communication needs or vulnerability;
- race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or another protected characteristic; or
- a pupil's dependence on another person or fear of retaliation.

4. Types and contexts of bullying

Bullying may be direct or indirect and may include:

- physical bullying – hitting, kicking, pushing, spitting, damaging or taking belongings, or threatening physical harm;
- verbal bullying – name-calling, insults, threats, humiliating comments or repeated taunting;
- social/relational bullying – deliberate exclusion, rumour-spreading, controlling friendships, isolation or encouraging others to reject a pupil;
- prejudice-related bullying – behaviour connected to race, religion or belief, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or another protected characteristic;
- sexual or sexist bullying – sexualised comments, rumours, gestures, unwanted attention or repeated sexist/misogynistic conduct;
- cyberbullying – bullying through messaging, social media, gaming, email, images, video, impersonation or other digital platforms; and
- AI-enabled bullying – using generative AI or digital manipulation to create or share fake, abusive, sexualised, humiliating or misleading images, audio, video or text about another person.

Further examples are provided in Appendix A.

5. Legal and statutory framework

This policy is informed by the following legislation and guidance:

The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Part 3, paragraph 10 – requires proprietors of independent schools, including academies through the relevant standards framework, to ensure bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable through an effective anti-bullying strategy.

Equality Act 2010 – requires schools to prevent unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and to have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (effective 1 September 2026) – requires schools to take a strong, proactive approach to bullying and recognises that bullying, including cyberbullying, can form part of child-on-child abuse and safeguarding concerns.

DfE Behaviour in Schools guidance – sets expectations for clear behaviour cultures, prevention, proportionate responses and support.

DfE Preventing and Tackling Bullying guidance – sets out principles for effective prevention and response, including cyberbullying and off-site conduct.

Children Act 1989 and 2004 – provide the wider safeguarding framework; bullying must be treated as a child protection concern where there is reasonable cause to suspect significant harm.

6. Rights Respecting Schools and the UNCRC

Evolve Academy is a UNICEF Rights Respecting School – Silver: Rights Aware. Our anti-bullying practice is explicitly linked to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

UNCRC Article	Anti-bullying link
Article 2	Non-discrimination – every child should enjoy their rights without discrimination.
Article 3	Best interests – the best interests of the child must be a primary consideration.
Article 12	Voice – children have the right to express their views and have them taken seriously.
Article 19	Protection from violence – children have the right to protection from physical and mental violence and abuse.
Article 28	Education – bullying must not prevent a child from accessing education.

Article 29	Goals of education – education should develop respect for human rights, diversity and others.
Article 31	Rest, play and participation – children should be able to participate safely in leisure and recreational activity.

7. Roles and responsibilities

The Academy Council / Governing Body

- approves and monitors the effectiveness of the policy;
- receives appropriate information on trends, serious incidents and the impact of preventative work; and
- holds leaders to account for maintaining a safe, inclusive culture.

The Headteacher

- ensures the policy is implemented consistently and resourced appropriately;
- ensures serious incidents are managed in line with safeguarding and behaviour procedures; and
- authorises suspensions and permanent exclusions where applicable.

The AHT Behaviour / Behaviour Lead

- leads the academy's anti-bullying strategy;
- reviews bullying entries on Sleuth and coordinates investigation/follow-up;
- analyses patterns and reports findings to SLT;
- coordinates Anti-Bullying Ambassadors and pupil voice activity; and
- ensures policy, practice, staff training and prevention work remain aligned.

The DSL / DDSL team

- provides safeguarding oversight where bullying may constitute or indicate child-on-child abuse, exploitation, harassment, significant harm or another safeguarding concern;
- supports safety planning and referral to external agencies where required.

All staff

- model respectful, calm and consistent behaviour;
- challenge inappropriate behaviour and discrimination promptly;
- listen to pupils and take reports seriously;
- record concerns accurately on Sleuth and alert the AHT Behaviour/DSL as required; and
- never ask a pupil to resolve a bullying concern alone.

Pupils

- treat others with dignity and respect;
- report bullying or unsafe behaviour to a trusted adult;
- avoid joining in, reinforcing or sharing harmful content; and
- support peers safely by being an upstander and seeking adult help.

Parents/carers

- encourage pupils to report concerns;
- share relevant information with the academy;
- work with the academy to support safety and behaviour change; and
- use the academy complaints process if concerns remain unresolved.

8. Preventing bullying: whole-school approach

Prevention is a core part of Evolve's behaviour and safeguarding culture. Our preventative approach includes:

- clear Behaviour for Learning expectations and consistent adult modelling;
- RSHE/PSHE, assemblies and curriculum content on respect, healthy relationships, online safety, prejudice and reporting;
- Anti-Bullying Week and other awareness activity, used as launch points for sustained work rather than one-off events;
- visible 'How to Report Bullying or a Concern' information in key areas;
- Worry Boxes and accessible routes for pupils who find verbal disclosure difficult;
- regular pupil voice and safeguarding surveys;
- Anti-Bullying Ambassadors and Student Council/Pupil Voice representation;
- staff supervision of identified hot spots and review of contextual risks;
- targeted mentoring, social skills, restorative work and regulation support;
- parent/carer communication and accessible policy information; and
- analysis of Sleuth data, repeat incidents, protected-characteristic concerns and emerging online trends.

9. Anti-Bullying Ambassadors and pupil leadership

The Anti-Bullying Ambassador programme was developed from Evolve's 'Power for Good' work and is now a standing part of the academy's pupil leadership and anti-bullying strategy. The programme reflects Evolve's strapline, 'Second Chances, Strong Futures', and our Rights Respecting commitment to pupil voice.

Ambassadors are selected through an application or age-appropriate nomination process and receive induction before taking up the role.

- Ambassadors promote kindness, inclusion and safe reporting.
- They may support awareness campaigns, displays, assemblies, new-pupil inclusion and pupil voice.
- They are not investigators, mediators, disciplinarians or substitutes for staff.
- They must never promise confidentiality or keep a safeguarding concern to themselves.
- If a pupil discloses a concern, the Ambassador's role is to listen, reassure and report immediately to a trusted adult.
- At least one or two ambassadors may link into Student Council/Pupil Voice so anti-bullying feedback informs wider school improvement.

Primary pupils may be recruited through staff nomination and paper-based processes where these are more accessible than digital applications.

10. Reporting bullying or a concern

Pupils may report a concern to:

- any member of staff;
- their Learning Advisor, Key Adult or ACE Mentor;
- a DSL/DDSL;
- the AHT Behaviour; or
- an Anti-Bullying Ambassador, who must pass the concern immediately to a trusted adult.

Pupils may report by:

- speaking directly to an adult;
- writing a note or using a class/tutor Worry Box;
- asking a trusted friend or Anti-Bullying Ambassador to help them tell an adult; or
- asking a parent/carer or professional to contact the academy.

Key message to pupils: You will be listened to. Bullying is taken seriously. You can talk, write, or ask an Ambassador or trusted adult for help.

11. Recording, investigation and decision-making

When a bullying concern is reported:

24. Staff ensure immediate safety and listen without leading the pupil or requiring a public disclosure.

25. The concern is recorded promptly on Sleuth using the appropriate bullying/behaviour/safeguarding category and the AHT Behaviour and/or DSL is alerted.
26. An appropriate lead considers whether immediate safeguarding action, safety planning, medical support or external agency advice is required.
27. Relevant pupils are spoken with separately where appropriate; witness accounts and available evidence are gathered.
28. The lead considers whether the behaviour meets the definition of bullying or is better categorised as conflict, a one-off behaviour incident, prejudice-related incident, sexual harassment/violence, online abuse or another safeguarding concern.
29. Parents/carers are informed as appropriate, with regard to safeguarding, confidentiality and the circumstances of the case.
30. Actions, support, consequences and review dates are recorded.

Investigations will be prompt, fair and proportionate. The academy will avoid language that assumes guilt before the facts have been established.

12. Responding to confirmed bullying

Where bullying is confirmed, the response will be tailored to seriousness, persistence, impact, risk, intent and the needs of the pupils involved. Actions may include:

- protective measures or an individual safety plan;
- parent/carer contact and formal written notification;
- restorative conversation or mediation, but only where the pupil harmed wishes to participate and it is safe and appropriate;
- mentoring, counselling, targeted intervention or behaviour support;
- reflection/regulation time or changes to supervision/peer group arrangements;
- loss of privileges or other proportionate consequences under the Behaviour for Learning Policy;
- behaviour report, contract or risk assessment review;
- suspension or, in the most serious or persistent cases, permanent exclusion in accordance with statutory guidance and the academy's behaviour procedures;
- referral to safeguarding partners, local authority services or police where required.

Evolve may use progressive parent/carer communication, including formal anti-bullying letters, where this supports clarity and accountability. The academy is not bound to a rigid 'three strikes' model and may move directly to a more serious response where risk or severity requires it.

13. Support for pupils affected by bullying

- an immediate opportunity to speak with a trusted adult;
- reassurance that the concern is being taken seriously;

- a safety plan or reasonable adjustments where needed;
- access to mentoring, counselling, pastoral or SEND support;
- support to restore confidence, attendance and participation;
- restorative work only where the pupil wishes to participate and it is safe;
- a planned follow-up, normally within two weeks, and further review as necessary; and
- clear information about who to speak to if concerns recur.

14. Support and intervention for pupils displaying bullying behaviour

Accountability and support are both important. Pupils who display bullying behaviour will be expected to understand impact, stop the behaviour and engage with agreed interventions.

- discussion and reflection on what happened, impact and triggers;
- clear re-teaching of expected behaviour and rights/responsibilities;
- restorative work where appropriate and agreed by the pupil harmed;
- parent/carer involvement;
- targeted mentoring, social communication or emotional regulation support;
- review of SEND, SEMH, trauma, safeguarding or contextual factors;
- behaviour plan/report or risk assessment review; and
- proportionate consequences under the Behaviour for Learning Policy.

15. Prejudice-related incidents, sexual harassment and safeguarding

Racist, religious, disablist, sexist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and other prejudice-related incidents are taken seriously and recorded appropriately. Such behaviour may constitute bullying, harassment, discrimination, a hate incident/crime or another serious behaviour concern depending on the circumstances.

Sexual harassment, sexual violence, harmful sexual behaviour and other forms of child-on-child abuse are safeguarding matters and will be managed in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and KCSIE 2026. The academy will not require repeated behaviour before acting on a serious safeguarding concern.

Police or external agency involvement is considered according to seriousness, risk, safeguarding need and potential criminality. It is not automatic solely because an incident is described as racist, sexist or homophobic.

16. Online, cyber and AI-enabled bullying

Online bullying can take place through social media, messaging, gaming, email, websites or other digital services and may occur outside academy hours. Where online behaviour affects pupils' safety, wellbeing, relationships, attendance or education, Evolve may respond under this policy and the Behaviour for Learning/Online Safety policies.

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) can support learning but can also be misused to harm others. AI-enabled bullying may include creating or sharing deepfakes, fabricated images, altered audio/video, impersonation, sexualised content, abusive text, false allegations or humiliating material.

Any suspected AI-enabled bullying will be preserved and investigated carefully where possible, with safeguarding and police advice sought where appropriate. Pupils should not forward or repeatedly view harmful material in order to report it; they should show or report it to a trusted adult.

17. SEND, SEMH and other vulnerabilities

Evolve recognises that pupils with SEND, communication needs, SEMH needs, looked-after or previously looked-after status, care experience, social vulnerability or other additional needs may be at increased risk of bullying or may find it harder to report concerns.

- reasonable adjustments to reporting, investigation and support;
- accessible language, visual supports or additional processing time;
- trusted-adult support and alternative means of giving an account;
- additional supervision or safe spaces during unstructured times;
- review of Class Learning Profiles, risk assessments and support plans; and
- liaison with SENCO, Designated Teacher, social workers or other professionals where appropriate.

Sanctions and interventions will take account of SEND and individual needs while maintaining the right of all pupils to be safe. SEND does not excuse bullying, but may affect how behaviour is understood and how change is supported.

18. Bullying beyond the school site

Evolve may respond to bullying or harmful behaviour outside the academy, including on journeys to and from school, online, during weekends/holidays or in the local community, where there is a clear impact on pupils, academy relationships, safety, attendance, learning or the reputation and orderly operation of the academy.

19. Parents and carers

Parents/carers are encouraged to:

- report concerns as early as possible;
- avoid encouraging confrontation or retaliation;
- retain relevant online evidence without redistributing harmful material;
- work with the academy on safety, support and behaviour-change plans;
- inform the academy of contextual information that may affect risk; and
- use the academy complaints procedure where they believe a concern has not been resolved appropriately.

20. Staff training, induction and CPD

Anti-bullying practice forms part of Evolve's wider behaviour, safeguarding and CPI training. New staff will be introduced to the reporting pathway during induction. Refresher training will be provided at least annually and may be targeted following serious incidents, emerging trends or quality assurance.

Training will cover, as appropriate:

- the definition of bullying and the distinction from conflict;
- prejudice-related and discriminatory behaviour;
- child-on-child abuse and sexual harassment;
- cyberbullying and AI-enabled harm;
- SEND and vulnerability;
- safe investigation and recording on Sleuth;
- CPI-aligned calm, consistent and non-confrontational responses;
- restorative practice and when it is/is not appropriate; and
- the role and boundaries of Anti-Bullying Ambassadors.

21. Monitoring, evaluation and pupil voice

The AHT Behaviour and DSL will jointly monitor anti-bullying practice through:

- regular review of Sleuth bullying data and repeat incidents;
- analysis of prejudice-related, online and safeguarding-linked concerns;
- pupil safeguarding surveys and pupil voice;
- feedback from Anti-Bullying Ambassadors and Student Council/Pupil Voice;
- case sampling to check timeliness, parent communication, support and follow-up;
- review of hot spots, unstructured times and contextual risks;
- staff feedback and training needs; and
- reporting to SLT and governors/Academy Council.

The policy will be reviewed annually and earlier if there is a significant incident, change in statutory guidance, inspection finding or evidence that current procedures are not effective.

22. Complaints and escalation

If a parent/carer or pupil believes a bullying concern has not been responded to appropriately, they should first raise this with the relevant senior leader. Where concerns remain unresolved, the academy's formal Complaints Policy should be followed. Safeguarding concerns may be escalated through the DSL and appropriate external safeguarding routes.

23. Related policies and guidance

- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Online Safety / Acceptable Use Policy
- Equality and Diversity / Equalities Policy
- Positive Handling / Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy
- SEND Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions procedures
- Complaints Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

Key external guidance:

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026

DfE Behaviour in Schools

DfE Preventing bullying

Equality Act 2010 guidance

Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014

Appendix A – Types and examples of bullying

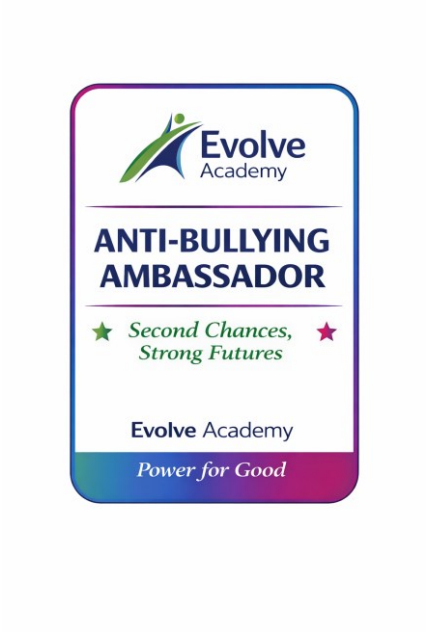
Type	Examples
Physical	Repeated hitting, kicking, pushing, spitting, intimidation, damaging/taking belongings, or threats of physical harm.
Verbal	Repeated name-calling, insults, humiliating comments, threats, mocking or taunting.
Social / relational	Deliberate exclusion, rumour-spreading, controlling friendships, encouraging others to isolate someone.
Racist / faith-related	Bullying connected to race, colour, nationality, ethnicity, religion or belief.
Disablist / SEND-related	Targeting disability, learning needs, communication needs, appearance, behaviour or perceived difference.
Sexist / misogynistic	Bullying based on sex, gender stereotypes, misogyny or sexualised expectations.
Homophobic, biphobic or transphobic	Bullying connected to actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender reassignment.
Sexual	Repeated sexualised comments, rumours, gestures, unwanted attention or harmful sexualised online content. Serious one-off incidents may be safeguarding concerns even if they do not meet the bullying definition.
Cyber	Repeated abusive messages, posts, group-chat exclusion, impersonation, image-sharing, doxxing, gaming abuse or online humiliation.
AI-enabled	Deepfakes, fabricated images/audio/video, impersonation, fake messages, abusive generated content, sexualised manipulation or false digital allegations.

Appendix B – Evolve's five-step reporting and response pathway

STEP 1 – TELL SOMEONE YOU TRUST	Pupil tells any staff member, Key Adult/ACE Mentor, DSL/DDSL or Anti-Bullying Ambassador. They may speak, write a note/use a Worry Box, or ask someone to help them tell an adult.
STEP 2 – STAFF RECORD THE CONCERN	Staff make a prompt Sleuth record and alert the AHT Behaviour and/or DSL. An Ambassador who receives a concern passes it immediately to a trusted adult.
STEP 3 – INVESTIGATION & SUPPORT	SLT/DSL investigate promptly and fairly, speak with relevant pupils, gather evidence where needed, consider safeguarding and inform parents/carers as appropriate.
STEP 4 – ACTION TAKEN	Protective action, support, restorative work where appropriate, behaviour intervention and proportionate consequences are agreed and recorded.
STEP 5 – FOLLOW-UP & REVIEW	AHT Behaviour/DSL checks that the bullying has stopped, pupils feel safe and support remains effective. A follow-up normally takes place within two weeks and continues as required.

Pupil message: You will always be listened to. Bullying is taken seriously and acted on. You can talk, write, or ask an Ambassador for help.

Appendix C – Anti-Bullying Ambassador role, boundaries and induction



Evolve Academy Anti-Bullying Ambassador badge – 'Second Chances, Strong Futures' / 'Power for Good'

Role purpose

Ambassadors are visible pupil leaders who promote kindness, inclusion, respectful relationships and safe reporting.

Core boundaries

- Listen, reassure, report.
- Never investigate an allegation.
- Never confront an alleged bully on another pupil's behalf.
- Never promise secrecy.
- Pass safeguarding concerns to an adult immediately.
- Do not share another pupil's personal information with friends or on social media.
- Model Evolve's Behaviour for Learning values and uphold the academy's expectations.

Minimum induction (approximately 30 minutes)

- What bullying is and how it differs from conflict;
- the Ambassador role and limits;
- safeguarding and confidentiality;
- CPI-aligned calm and supportive language;
- UNCRC Articles 2, 12, 19 and 29;
- how to use the reporting pathway;

- what to do with online/AI-related concerns; and
- the Ambassador pledge: 'I will use my Power for Good by helping others feel safe, respected and included, and by passing concerns to a trusted adult.'

Document development note

This V2 rewrite consolidates Evolve Academy's existing Anti-Bullying Policy, the academy's reporting flowchart, Anti-Bullying Ambassador materials, the 2025 'Power for Good' implementation work and relevant features from the Victory Park Academy policy example, alongside current statutory guidance for the 2026-27 academic year.