| Title and Description | **Anti-Bullying Policy** |
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| Document History | | | |
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| Version | Date of Review | Author | Notes on Revision |
| 2 | September 2023 | Michele Osborne | P7 – Note added where incidents may be reported to the Police, where appropriate, to support any victims of bullying. |
| | September 2024 | Michele Osborne | No changes |
| | March 2025 | Michele Osborne | Inclusion of public transport note. |
| 3 | September 2025 | Michele Osborne | P2 – AI Summary added.<br>P3 Outline of new offences from the Online Safety Act 2023.<br>P8 Inclusion of misuse of Generative AI with regard to cyber bullying. |
| 4 | September 2026 | Michele Osborne | P3 Note on Mobile Phone Policy & Summary edited. P4 wording edit for policies.<br>P5 Note on early identification. P9 Edit on sexualised behaviours.<br>P10 Note on risk assessments & serious violence and prejudice behaviours.<br>P6 Change of wording to Peer Mentors and edit of language. |

## AI Summary of Anti Bullying Policy

Framwellgate School Durham's Anti-Bullying Policy promotes a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment rooted in values of being known and valued. The policy defines bullying as repeated, intentional harm—physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, online, or prejudice-related—and outlines clear procedures for prevention, reporting, and response. Updates include recognition of new cyber offences under the Online Safety Act 2023 and the misuse of Generative AI. The school addresses bullying both on and off premises, including public transport and online platforms, and cooperates with police when necessary.

Support is provided for both victims and perpetrators, with interventions ranging from counselling to disciplinary actions. The policy distinguishes bullying from normal peer conflict and emphasizes emotional literacy and resilience. It also outlines responses to prejudice-related incidents, hate crimes, and sexual harassment, reinforcing a zero-tolerance stance. Staff are trained to identify signs of bullying, and students are encouraged to report concerns confidently.

Monitoring and evaluation are ongoing, involving student voice, safeguarding systems (CPOMS), and collaboration with external agencies. The policy is reviewed annually and aims to foster a culture of openness, empathy, and accountability.

# ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

**Values and Ethos**
Like all good schools, we're driven by our values above all else. We define these as:

Excellence - Everyone in our community will know and experience success

The most for those that need the most - We will meet the needs of all our learners

Known and valued - Everyone here will be celebrated for who they are and what they do

Collective endeavour - We will achieve success together

Joy - Everyone will know and create joy

These five values determine all that we do, and every part of the school flows from them. They set the direction and act as a compass to ensure we continue to grow and develop as a school in the way that we feel best supports all our students.

## 1. Introduction

1.1 This policy is based on DfE guidance "Preventing and Tackling Bullying" July 2017 and supporting documents. It also takes into account the DfE statutory guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education".

1.2 This Policy on Anti-bullying behaviour is linked with, but not limited to, other school policies, procedures and practices such as;

i. Behaviour and Rewards

ii. Online Safety Policy

iii. Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

iv. Complaints procedure

The policy on anti-bullying is embedded in the ethos and values of the school as well as procedures for promoting a positive culture for learning behaviour management.

1.3 Bullying is "behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally". (DfE "Preventing and Tackling Bullying", July 2017). Bullying can be:

- Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, biting, etc.
- Verbal: name calling, taunting, mocking, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling, making offensive comments.
- Emotional: isolating others, tormenting, hiding possessions, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidating, excluding, manipulation and coercion.
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films etc.
- Online/Cyber: sending offensive, upsetting and inappropriate messages by phone, text, instant messenger, through gaming, websites, social media sites and apps, and sending offensive or degrading photos or videos. This also includes new offences outlined in the Online Safety Act 2023, including cyber flashing, epilepsy trolling, threatening communications, encouraging serious self-harm and sharing intimate images, including deepfakes.
- Indirect: can include the exploitation of individuals.

- Racist: racial taunts, gestures or making fun or negative comments about someone's religion or race.

Bullying can be a form of child –on –child abuse and can be abusive; it can cause severe and adverse effects on children's emotional development. Bullying may be prejudice or hate-related. The school recognises its role in promoting an understanding and inclusive environment for all in terms of 'protected characteristics'.

## 2. Aims

2.1 Framwellgate School Durham recognises that bullying, especially if left unaddressed can have a devastating effect on individuals; it can create a barrier to learning and have serious consequences for mental wellbeing. By effectively preventing and tackling bullying, our schools can help to create safe, disciplined environment, where students are able to learn and fulfil their potential. One of our aims is to lead students towards an understanding of their own feelings, as well as the feelings and sensitivities of others. Promoting 'emotionally literate' young people includes helping them to have empathy for others. Framwellgate School Durham aims to create a culture of 'openness' where all incidents of bullying are reported and challenged.

2.2 Other aims include promoting:-

i. Our ethos and values statement outlined above

ii. respect for the dignity and worth of all members of the school community, as well as tolerance of diversity and the promotion of community cohesion.

iii. safeguarding of our students and trying to ensure they are educated in an environment that is safe and caring.

## 3. Principles and Rationale

i. Students have the right to be safe at school and that bullying is unacceptable.

ii. Clear procedures will be followed when bullying does occur and that problems will be addressed, as appropriate. Sanctions (as identified within the Rewards and Sanctions Policy) and support for individuals will be implemented. Take appropriate, proportionate and reasonable action, in line with existing school policies, for any bullying bought to the schools attention, which involves or effects students, even when they are not on school premises, for example, when using school transport, public transport or online, etc. This will also include any bullying behaviours that the school deem as unacceptable and will be at the Headteacher's discretion. Students, parents and carers must note, that any incidents outside of school and off the school premises, may also be challenged, whether students are in their school uniform or not.

iii. In cases where parents/carers chose to report issues to the police the policy of the school is to cooperate with any subsequent Police investigation by sharing with them any relevant information held by the school.

iv. A clear and precise account of the incident will be recorded by the school in accordance with existing procedures. This will include recording appropriate details regarding decisions and action taken on CPOMS. We recognise early patterns of bullying behaviours and consider that child on child abuse may indicate issues from both victims and perpetrators.

<u>Why respond to bullying?</u>

Bullying is unacceptable and unkind. No one deserves to suffer from bullying in any setting. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect and compassion and feel safe in school. Bullying will not be tolerated or go unchallenged in school. We are committed to providing a safe,

caring, friendly environment for all students so that they can grow and learn in a relaxed and safe setting.

Tackling bullying is the responsibility of all members of staff in school. We tackle bullying as an issue because we are a respectful and caring school, and we believe that:

- Bullying makes people unhappy and leads to low self-esteem.
- Students who are being bullied are unlikely to concentrate fully on their schoolwork and their commitment to school.
- Some students avoid being bullied by not attending school.
- Students who observe unchallenged bullying behaviour may copy this anti-social behaviour.
- We wish to build the self-esteem of all students, especially bullies and victims, and understand why students are unkind to others in order to support them and any underlying causes.
- All students deserve to feel safe at school

Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

A student may indicate by signs, words or behaviour that he/she/they are being bullied. To those who know the student, this may be a feeling that 'things aren't quite right' or students are 'not their usual self'. Staff in school should be aware of these possible signs (this list is not exhaustive) and that they should investigate or report to the Pastoral Staff/Year Teams if a student:

- Is frightened of walking to or from school
- Doesn't want to go on the public/school bus
- Refuses to attend school or there is a notable change in attendance
- Insists on being driven to school, changes their usual routine.
- Begins to truant or is late to lessons
- Demonstrates patterns of disruptive behaviour in certain lessons so they have to be removed from class.
- Becomes withdrawn or disengaged.
- Becomes anxious or lacking in confidence.
- Starts stammering, attempts or threatens suicide or runs away. Noticeable concerns for their mental health
- Change in general presentation or shows a decline in their emotional wellbeing.
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares. Parents/Carers report changes in sleep
- Feels ill in the morning or finds excuses to go home/not attend school on time.
- Begins to do poorly in schoolwork.
- Comes home with clothes torn or books/items damaged.
- Has possessions which are damaged or unexpectedly go missing.
- Asks for money or starts stealing money or other items (to pay bully).
- Has dinner or other monies continually "lost" (bus fares etc).
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises (always report to DOS/DSL).
- Comes home hungry (money / lunch has been stolen).
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive, emotional or unreasonable.
- Is bullying other children or siblings or becoming incredibly unkind to others.
- Stops eating or drinking.
- Is frightened to say what's wrong or talk about their mood in general
- Is afraid to use the internet/school IT or mobile phone

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated. Always report any changes in behaviour to the Pastoral/Year Team or DOS/Designated Safeguarding Leads if you have any concerns.

4.1 This work to promote understanding happens in curriculum time and in a number of other ways. Framwellgate School Durham will strive to:

i. Address bullying as a regular theme within PSHE courses and other enrichment activities such as professionals from external agencies. (PSHE courses are regularly reviewed and

adapted by year group teams of teachers. Lessons are flexible enough to deal with issues raised by students).

ii. Listen to student voice and act upon this accordingly.

iii. Use various enrichment activities and programmes to support positive relationships.

iv. Deploy support staff to respond to allegations of bullying.

v. Monitor the use of e-mails on the school ICT system to ensure that school facilities are not misused to bully others (as per the Online Safety Policy)

vi. Develop the use of the Student Council /Peer Mentors within school to provide advice and guidance as well as assist in the monitoring and evaluation of the Policy

4.2 Students, parents/carers, governors, and staff will be informed of our anti–bullying policy and procedures through media such as the school website, induction procedures and the School Prospectus.

Students who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Reassuring the student and providing continuous support.
- Offering a swift opportunity to discuss the experience with their teacher, the designated safeguarding lead, or a member of staff of their choice.
- Being advised to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to concerns and build resilience as appropriate.
- Working towards restoring self-esteem and confidence.
- Providing ongoing support; this may include: working and speaking with staff, offering formal counselling, engaging with parents and carers.
- Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance; this could include support through Early Help or Specialist Children's Services, or support through Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).
- Where appropriate we will refer incidents to the Police for additional support.

Students who have perpetrated the bullying will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened, establishing the concern and the need to change.
- Informing parents/carers to help change the attitude and behaviour of the child.
- Providing appropriate education and support regarding their behaviour or actions.
- If online, requesting that content be removed and reporting accounts/content to service provider.
- Sanctioning, in line with school behaviour/discipline policy; this may include official warnings, detentions, removal of privileges (including online access when encountering cyberbullying concerns), and fixed-term or permanent exclusions.
- Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance; this may include involvement from the Police or referrals to Early Help, Specialist Children's Services, or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) as appropriate

<u>What does not constitute Bullying?</u>

It is important to understand that bullying is not an odd occasional falling out with friends, occasional name-calling, banter, arguments, or when the occasional 'joke' is played on someone. Children do sometimes fall out, disagree with others, or say things because they are upset or angry. When such problems or conflicts of this kind arise, it is not always classed as bullying.

It is an important part of a child's development and resilience to learn how to deal with friendship breakdowns, conflict, disagreements with others and the odd name calling or childish prank or jokes. We all must learn how to deal with these situations and develop social skills to repair relationships and build resilience. However, this is not deemed as acceptable, and we take all

incidents which undermine the safety and well-being of students seriously and challenge any unacceptable behaviour.

4.3 Cyberbullying

The increasing use of digital technology and the internet has also provided new and particularly intrusive ways for bullies to reach their victims. Cyberbullying can take many forms and bullying online can often start in school and then be progressed online or start online and influence behaviour in school. Whilst most incidents of Cyberbullying occur outside school, we will offer support and guidance to parents or carers and their children who experience online bullying and will treat Cyberbullying with the same severity as any other form of bullying. When responding to cyberbullying concerns, the school will:

i. Act as soon as an incident has been reported or identified.

ii. Provide appropriate support for the person who has been cyberbullied and work with the person who has carried out the bullying to ensure that it does not happen again.

iii. Encourage the person being bullied to keep any evidence (screenshots) of the bullying activity to assist any investigation.

iv. Take all available steps where possible to identify the person responsible. This may include looking at use of the school systems; identifying and interviewing possible witnesses; contacting the service provider and the police, if necessary

v. Work with the individuals and online service providers to prevent the incident from spreading and assist in removing offensive or upsetting material from circulation. This may include supporting reports to a service provider to remove content if those involved are unable to be identified or if those involved refuse to or are unable to delete content.

vi. Confiscating and searching students' electronic devices, such as mobile phones, in accordance with the law and DfE guidance 'Searching, screening and confiscation at school' and Childnet Cyberbullying guidance to ensure that the school's powers are used proportionately and lawfully.

vii. Request the deletion of locally-held content and content posted online if they contravene school behavioural policies.

viii. Provide information to staff, parents and students regarding steps they can take to protect themselves online. This may include advising those targeted not to retaliate or reply; providing advice on blocking or removing people from contact lists; helping those involved to think carefully about what private information they may have in the public domain.

ix. This also includes any misuse of any imagery created, shared or copied of anyone with the use of generative AI. Staff in school will liaise and report to the Police if we feel any misuse of any content or imagery has been used to cause harm to any individual.

4.4 Prejudice Related Incidents

'A prejudice-related incident is any incident which is perceived to be prejudice-related by the victim or any other person'. This definition was first recommended as a working definition for racist incidents by The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and has since been extended to cover all incidents related to the protected characteristics set out in The Equality Act 2010. It informs people how to respond when they become aware of the incident and ensures that the incident is investigated. Importantly, it ensures that people are listened to.

The most common prejudice-related incidents take the form of verbal abuse and prejudicial language. It is the school's policy to challenge any language used by staff, parents or students that may be perceived as 'prejudice/discriminatory related' language. This includes, but not limited to the following areas:

- Homophobic Language (terms of abuse used towards lesbian, gay and bisexual people or those thought to be LGBT)
- Racist Language, faith targeted abuse and other prejudice-based incidents (terms of abuse used towards others because of their race/ethnicity/nationality)
- Transphobic Language (terms of abuse used towards those who are perceived as transgender or do not fit with the gender 'norms'
- Disablist Language (terms of abuse used towards those with a learning or physical disability)
- Young Carers
- Asylum Seekers, refugees, race and ethnicity, disabilities, sectarianism, sex and gender, social or economic prejudice, or equality and diversity prejudice.

4.5 Hate Crimes/Hate Incidents

There is no legal definition of a hate crime. However, the police and the CPS (Crown Prosecution Service) have an agreed definition of hate crime as:

"Any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's race or perceived race; religion or perceived religion; sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation; disability or perceived disability and any crime motivated by hostility or prejudice against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender."

There is a distinction between a hate crime and a hate incident.

"A hate incident is any incident which the victim, or anyone else, thinks is based on someone's prejudice towards them because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or because they are transgender."

A hate incident does not necessarily break the law. Where a hate incident amounts to a criminal offence, and is based on one of the protected characteristics, it is known as a hate crime.

Hate crime can fall into one of three main types: physical assault, verbal abuse and incitement to hatred:

- <u>Physical assault</u>
  Physical assault of any kind is an offence.

- <u>Verbal abuse</u>
  Verbal abuse, threats or name-calling

- <u>Incitement to hatred</u>
  The offence of incitement to hatred occurs when someone acts in a way that is threatening and intended to stir up hatred. That could be in words, pictures, videos, music, and includes information posted on websites.

  Hate content may include:

- messages calling for violence against a specific person or group.
- web pages that show pictures, videos or descriptions of violence against anyone due to their perceived differences
- chat forums where people ask other people to commit hate crimes against a specific person or group

Any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person as being motivated by prejudice or hate, based on a person's actual or perceived race and ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability or transgender status is considered a hate crime. Courts have a duty to increase the sentence of any offence (for example assault or criminal damage) which is aggravated by prejudice. Students who perpetrate bullying motivated by hate within school or in public places can be taken to court and cautioned, fined, sentenced to a community order or even receive a prison sentence.

4.6 Sexual Harassment

Framwellgate School Durham promotes a zero tolerance approach to sexual violence and harassment. We maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' and hold the view that it is never acceptable and will not be tolerated and it should never be passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" as this increases the risk of normalising such behaviour.

Sexual harassment can be defined as 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school. Sexual harassment can include but not limited to:

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names;
- sexual "jokes" or taunting;
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and online sexual harassment such as sharing of nude and semi-nude images, creating, distributing or manipulating images of individuals and videos, sharing of unwanted explicit content, upskirting, downblousing, unwanted sexual comments and messages on social media and sexual exploitation, coercion and threats

We recognise that sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. There are many different ways to describe children who have been subjected to sexual violence and/or sexual harassment and many ways to describe those who are alleged to have carried out any form of abuse. For the purposes of these types of situation whilst the school will use the terms 'victim' and 'alleged perpetrator/perpetrator' the school will recognise that not everyone who has been subjected to sexual violence and/or sexual harassment considers themselves a victim or would want to be described in this way.

Framwellgate School Durham will ensure that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe and support the view that a victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem or feel ashamed by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Systems are in place for students to confidently report sexual harassment. School recognises however that a preventative education programme which is underpinned by the school's behaviour policy is key to tackling issues of sexual harassment. The school has developed, and will review, a comprehensive Personal Development programme for all students. More detail can be found in our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Serious violence may involve, but is not limited to, physical assault, carrying, threatening with or using weapons or items deemed as a weapon or threatening object. This can often be linked with peer conflict, bullying or exploitation.

**5. Recording and Reporting**

i. Students and staff are more likely to speak up about prejudice and harassment if they know that they will be taken seriously. Historically, targets may have been dismissed or ignored, which can be devastating for them, preventing others from speaking up and allowing incidents to escalate. The definition we use empowers everyone to act. The onus is not just on the target to speak up. The inclusion of 'or any other person' means that anyone who perceives a prejudice/faith related incident to have occurred can instigate an investigation. This also ensures that incidents where there is no direct target, such as racist graffiti or casual use of homophobic language, are also challenged.

ii. It is important to note that there is no mention of intention, just because someone didn't intend to offend, doesn't change the impact of the action. Intention is important when considering the actions that need to be taken with the perpetrator, but a lack of intent does not prevent it from being a prejudice-related incident and being reported as such.

iii. All incidents will be investigated, all parties will feel listened to and all decisions will be evidence based. It may be that at the end of the investigation it is decided that the incident was not

prejudice-related, but this will be evidenced based and all parties will receive an explanation behind the reasoning.

iv. Any investigation should quickly uncover baseless accusations. If malicious complaints are made, there will be repercussions for the complainant, which will prevent these kinds of accusations from becoming widespread. In addition, it is important to consider that a student who may report an incident may have been subjected to prejudice-related behaviour from others in the past, or may have internalised prejudice and discrimination directed at their community or other family members. Claiming to be the target of prejudice-related behaviour may tell us about a young person's self-esteem and perception of themselves in relation to their peers and society.

v. Prejudice related incidents and incidents of a sexual nature are recorded on our safeguarding system CPOMs. Sanctions for prejudice related incidents are included in the Reward and Sanctions policy. Framwellgate School Durham works closely with other statutory agencies to provide help, support and education to those who carry out or are affected by a prejudice related incident or an incident of a sexual nature. This may include discussing the incident with Durham Constabulary or any other relevant body, such as First Contact.

vi. When there has been a report of sexual harassment or violence, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy) will consider a risk and needs assessment. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The risk and needs assessment will consider:
- the victim
- whether there may have been other victims,
- the alleged perpetrator(s); and
- all of the other children in the school

## 6. Monitoring & Evaluation

6.1 This Policy will be reviewed each year in line with the annual cycle of whole school self-evaluation and improvement planning. This review will be led by the appropriate member of SLT. Monitoring of the impact of this policy will be linked to the established processes of self-evaluation, including the role of student leaders and anti-bullying peer supporters. We will involve students in policy writing and decision making, to ensure that they understand the school's approach and are clear about the part they have to play to prevent bullying. We will canvas children and young people's views on the extent and nature of bullying. We will ensure that all students know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying. We will ensure that all students are aware of the range of sanctions which may be applied against those engaging in bullying.