



# Anti-Bullying Policy

**Date reviewed: March 2024**

**Date to be reviewed: March 2027 (or as and when required)**

## 1) Introduction

The Anti-bullying policy has been written in line with our legal duty under Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which requires us to have measures in place to prevent all forms of bullying amongst students and to promote good behaviour. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Behaviour Policy, Managing Allegations Against Other Students Policy and the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy. This policy will be shared with staff, students, Academy Councillors and parents/carers and available in paper or electronic versions.

At Ivy House School we are committed to providing a safe and caring environment for all and we do not tolerate bullying of any kind. If bullying does occur, students should have confidence that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Staff need to be vigilant and use their knowledge of the individual students and the situation. This is particularly important given the diverse needs and disabilities of the students within school. Staff are trained in supporting each pupil with their specific communication strategies and class staff will have developed a positive relationship with students in their class to identify changes in behaviour and/or circumstances. The school has a range of specialist provisions and resources to support students to communicate effectively. **All staff have a duty to respond promptly and effectively.**

All of the students at Ivy House School have special educational needs and may present with additional disabilities, e.g. multiple learning difficulties, sensory, physical, medical need, Autism, challenging behaviour or any combination of these. Therefore, our approach to anti-bullying needs to take into consideration the impact of inappropriate behaviours on our physically and emotionally vulnerable students, whilst also recognising the influence of specific types of special needs on the behaviour of some children and young adults. While the school recognises this dilemma, it is also dedicated to combating both the rare cases of 'true bullying' that may occur and the possible, while unintentional, incidents that may make students feel threatened, unsafe or afraid. The school will act promptly and firmly to combat bullying and aspects of behaviours that may impact upon the emotional and well-being of all, whenever and wherever it occurs.

At Ivy House School, we encourage open discussions around differences between people, we actively challenge prejudice, and we celebrate diversity. We adopt a contextual safeguarding, trauma-informed and strengths-based approach to bullying and child-on-child abuse, and we are committed to working with families and outside agencies where appropriate.

## 2) Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- To ensure that all students, staff and parents/carers are aware of this Policy and fulfil their obligations to it.
- To reduce and eradicate wherever possible instances in which students are subjected to bullying in any form, including racist bullying, homophobic or gender variant bullying, of children who may be vulnerable (for example Autistic, SEND, EAL) and cyber bullying.
- Ensure students are able to learn in a caring and safe environment, without fear of bullying.
- Ensure an anti-bullying culture and a safe and secure learning environment exist for all students

- To establish appropriate ways of dealing with bullying and provide after-care should an incident occur.
- Prevent incidents of bullying where possible, through the curriculum delivery, relevant assemblies, caring and supportive relationships between staff and students and vigilance from staff
- Ensure staff are alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly in accordance with the school policy
- Make sure staff, students, and parents are aware of the appropriate action to take if they consider themselves to be being bullied or have witnessed or suspect another students is being bullied

### **3) Roles and Responsibilities**

All staff at our school are aware that children and young adults may bully their peers, and that this can happen both inside and outside of school, and online. All staff understand the school's Anti-Bullying Policy, our approach and know the important role that they each have in preventing and tackling bullying.

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for Anti-Bullying at our school. They are responsible for appointing a Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Lead and liaising with the Academy Council, parents/carers, the Local Authority, and outside agencies when appropriate.

The Deputy Headteacher, George Turner, has overall responsibility for Behaviour and Anti-Bullying and works with Tara Gaskin (Pastoral and Operations coordinator) and Katie Brown (Class Teacher) who are members of the Behaviour Team and PROACT-SCIPr-UK® trainers.

The Deputy Headteacher is responsible for:

- Policy development and review (ensuring that students, staff, governors, and parents/carers have opportunities to contribute)
- Implementing the policy and monitoring/assessing its effectiveness
- Managing the reporting and recording of bullying incidents
- Coordinating Anti-Bullying training and support for staff and parents/carers where appropriate
- Monitoring the effectiveness of strategies for preventing bullying behaviour

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and their Deputies in our school are: Claire Porter, Ian Armstrong and George Turner. Safeguarding is the responsibility of all, however all staff, parents/carers and students need to be aware of who to report to and how to report any safeguarding concerns.

### **4) Bullying – A definition**

Although a specialist school like Ivy House School may not experience bullying in the same manner as a mainstream school, it would be naive not to address the issue in a positive manner. The behaviours of some of our children / young people and the vulnerability of others make it essential that the school remains sensitive to the subject. We should also be aware that although not deliberate, bullying for some of our children / young people can be upset by others noises in a cause and effect manner which excludes deliberate intent and empathy.

We can define bullying as deliberate behaviour or aggression by one or more people, which produces damaging or hurtful effects, physically or emotionally,

either directly or indirectly through means such as online gaming and social media, to any individual. It is often repeated over a period of time and it is usually difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

## 5) What does bullying behaviour look like?

At Ivy House School, we consider the context within which incidents and/or behaviours of concern occur. We will consider the motivations behind the behaviours and will take into account the age and stage of development of the pupils involved. Our focus will always be the safety and welfare of all students involved.

Bullying behaviour may include, but is not limited to:

**Physical** – pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching etc.

**Verbal** – name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling

**Emotional** – isolating others, tormenting, hiding books/belongings, 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** – posting on social media, sharing photos, sending harmful or unfriendly text messages, social exclusion etc.

**Indirect** – can include the exploitation of individuals such as 'false friendships', criminal exploitation, sexual exploitation, and radicalisation

**Prejudice-related** – derogatory and discriminatory language and behaviour including that which is racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disablist in nature. This language and behaviour may be directed towards people because of their race/ethnicity/nationality; because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or trans, or are perceived to be, or have a parent/carer, sibling, or friend who is, because they have a learning or physical disability. Such language and behaviour are generally used to refer to something or someone as inferior.

There is no hierarchy of bullying, all forms of bullying are taken equally seriously and will be dealt with appropriately.

A student may indicate by signs or behaviour that they are being bullied. These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems and should be viewed in the context of safeguarding training; bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

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

- is frightened of being out in the playground
- does not want to go on the school bus
- is unwilling to go to school
- becomes withdrawn, anxious, over emotional or lacking in confidence
- attempts or threatens to self-harm or run away
- cries him/herself to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- school work begins to deteriorate
- has possessions damaged or go missing
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable

- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- refuses to discuss what is wrong

## **6) Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, students and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Bard.

Ivy House School recognises that AI has many uses to help students learn, but may also have the potential to be used to bully others. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.

We will treat any use of AI to bully pupils in line with our Anti-Bullying policy.

## **7) Preventing bullying**

We will use various methods to help students to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- Modelling and reinforcing good behaviour.
- Using the curriculum and assemblies to promote an anti-bullying culture
- Teaching students what forms bullying can take, what to do and who to confide in if they consider they are being bullied. Students will be encouraged to seek support and to tell an adult if they are the victim of bullying (parent, teacher, teaching assistant, lunch time supervisor, school nurse).
- We provide students opportunities for students to share their feelings and concerns with staff.
- We promote an atmosphere of openness.
- We listen carefully to students and are in tune with changes within behaviour that are observed.
- Maintaining and raising self-esteem and personal development - a range of rewards and sanctions as outlined in the school's Behaviour Policy will be applied in an attempt to combat bullying.
- Using stories, pictures or videos about bullying.
- Teaching students about keeping safe online.
- Taking part in national events such a National Anti-Bullying Week and Safer Internet Day.
- School Council Meetings are held on a regular basis for students to discuss issues.

## **8) Dealing with bullying**

At Ivy House School, we want students, parents/carers, staff, and visitors to confidently report bullying and know that their concerns will be taken seriously. We remain committed to supporting and safeguarding all students involved including the target, the alleged perpetrator, any bystanders/witnesses to the bullying behaviour and the wider school community. We have clear reporting systems for our school community, the effectiveness of these reporting systems is reviewed throughout the academic year and may be expanded to meet the needs of all members of our community.

If there is suspicion that a student is being bullied:

- This should be reported immediately to the school's Behaviour Leads or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Allegations of bullying will be investigated and steps should be taken immediately to prevent it from happening again.
- Incidents of bullying should be recorded on a behavioural incident form and reported to the Behaviour Lead.
- Staff should be aware of the difference between bullying and behaviour that could be a means of communication.
- In serious and/or recurrent cases the Headteacher and the parents of the students involved will be informed and asked to attend a meeting
- In serious recurrent cases, fixed term exclusions could be taken into consideration
- Students who have been the victim of bullying will have extra support in the form of; regular wellbeing checks with a preferred member of staff, reassurance and activities to build confidence and self-esteem

We understand that it can be very difficult for a parent/carer to be concerned or hear that their child has been the target of bullying, has experienced bullying behaviour or is an alleged perpetrator of bullying.

## **9) Parents/carers**

We ask that if parents/carers have concerns about their child experiencing or perpetrating bullying, that they contact a member of school staff. Initially we ask parents/carers to contact their child's class teacher (in person/via telephone call/via email/) to explain their concerns. The class teacher will take an initial note of the concerns but may ask to schedule a meeting to allow for more time to discuss the concerns in detail. Following the report and/or the meeting, the teacher will make a formal record of the bullying report on the school's Safeguard recording system (My Concern) and other relevant members of staff will be alerted. The member of staff will directly alert the school's Behaviour Lead, Designated Safeguarding Lead or Headteacher if the report is deemed urgent or if a pupil is considered at risk.

We ask that parents/carers come directly to the school with their concerns rather than discussing them with other members of the school community in person or online.

Our school remains committed to supporting pupils and their families in all instances of bullying and relational conflict and will respond to reports promptly. Even if the behaviour/incident which has been reported is deemed 'not bullying' and is thought to be 'relational conflict', school staff will still support the pupils involved and help them to resolve any concerns.

We will endeavour to ensure that all parties are kept informed of progress and any developments, but we will also need to show due regard to GDPR. This may mean, at times, that we are not able to provide or share information or updates.

Parents/carers are expected to speak to their children about kindness and appropriate behaviour, where appropriate, and to report any possible incidents of bullying to a member of the leadership team.

## **10) School staff**

Our staff work closely with our students and therefore may notice a change in a pupil's behaviour or attitude that might indicate that something is wrong before receiving a report from a pupil or a member of the school community. If staff have any concerns about a student's welfare or are concerned that a pupil is displaying behaviours that may show they are the target of bullying or perhaps perpetrating bullying, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told.

We ask that staff report their concerns to the Behaviour Lead, Designated Safeguarding Lead or Headteacher. The member of staff receiving the report will take an initial note of the concerns and will then make a formal record of the bullying report on the school's Safeguard recording system (My Concern) and other relevant staff members will be alerted. The member of staff must directly alert the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead if the report is deemed urgent or if a pupil is considered at risk.

If a member of staff, student on placement or volunteer feels they or another member of staff is being bullied it is their responsibility to share their concerns with the Headteacher or the Chair of the Academy Council as part of the whistleblowing or grievance procedures. Allegations of bullying will be taken seriously, investigated and steps taken to ensure it does not happen again. In serious and/or recurrent cases the Headteacher will take appropriate action

If any individual at Ivy House School is a victim of bullying they will be supported throughout the process by the Headteacher and the Senior Leadership Team, ensuring that they are able to feel safe and confident. The emotional well-being of both the staff and students is paramount.

## **10) Visitors**

We ensure that all visitors to our school are aware of our Safeguarding & Child Protection procedures and which staff members they should report any concerns to (the member of staff may differ depending on the purpose of the visit e.g., supply teacher, governor, external agency etc.). We ask that if a visitor to our school has any concerns about bullying behaviour that they have witnessed, or been told about, that they report their concerns at the earliest opportunity in person to the school's Senior Leadership Team. We ask that visitors report their concerns in person by the end of the school day. For example, it would not be appropriate to wait until the following day or leave a written note with concerns. The member of staff receiving the report will take an initial note of the concerns and will then make a formal record of the bullying report on the school's Safeguard recording system (My Concern) and other relevant staff members will be alerted. The member of staff will directly alert the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead if the report is deemed urgent or if a pupil is considered at risk.

## **10) Breaches / Complaints**

Breaches to this policy will be dealt with in the same way that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the Headteacher, Shaw Education Trust and Academy Council.

If a parent/carer is not satisfied with our school's actions, we ask that they follow our school's complaint policy and procedures. This is available online from our school website, and on request from the school office.