



Solefield School

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

The aim of the anti-bullying policy is to ensure that pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will pupils be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available at Solefield School. This policy applies to the whole school including the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception class and Little Acorns Pre-School). It is written with regard to the Department for Education's *Preventing and Tackling Bullying* (July 2017, current version), *Cyberbullying: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff* (2014), *Teaching Online Safety in Schools* (current DfE guidance), *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (current edition), the School's Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Online Safety / Acceptable Use Policies, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, Allergy Safety Policy (or Medical Conditions Policy) following the new DfE allergy safety guidance published July 2026.

Definition

Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, toward a pupil or group. The three main types of bullying are:

physical (hitting, kicking, theft)

verbal (name calling, derogatory remarks about race, religion, culture, sex, gender, sexuality, homosexuality, special educational needs or disability, or because the pupil is adopted or is a carer)

indirect (spreading rumours, excluding someone from social groups, or cyber bullying such as that through social websites, mobile 'phones, text messages, photographs or email)

Bullying is serious and will always be treated as such. It can be physical and/or emotional, which may cause psychological damage. Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school. Pupils must be encouraged to report bullying at Solefield.

A bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern when there is cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This policy should be read in

conjunction with the school's Safeguarding Policy, the school's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, the school's RSHE Policy and the school's Mental Health Policy.

The school's teaching and ancillary staff must be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with school policy. The school has identified times and places where bullying is most likely to occur and has arranged staff cover and duties as appropriate (e.g. changing rooms before school and after games, playground, library and ICT room at break times). The school has also split break times on certain days to counter the threat of bullying. The school makes regular use of the CCTV footage taken from the playground and buildings and staff: pupil ratios are good with staff on duty at playtimes actively patrolling and interacting with pupils.

Statutory duty of the school

The Headmistress has a legal duty under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to draw up procedures to prevent bullying among pupils and to bring these procedures to the attention of staff, parents and pupils.

Raising Staff and Pupil Awareness

All staff receive child protection training and guidance to help identify cases of bullying. The school and staff recognise the seriousness of bullying in causing psychological damage and even suicide. Within the curriculum the school will raise the awareness of the nature of bullying through inclusion in PSHE, form tutorial time, assemblies and subject areas, as appropriate, in an attempt to eradicate such behaviour. From January 2015, incidents of bullying and unacceptable behaviour are entered centrally in the school's "behaviour tracker" by the teachers involved and an email is sent to the pupil's form taker. The tracker is checked daily by Mrs Goodwin (EYFS and KS1) Mr Henry (KS2) and Mrs Payne/ Mr Cramp (KS3) who will investigate and speak to the pupils involved. The tracker is checked at least twice weekly by the SLT.

Staff are trained every three years in child protection and anti-bullying with regular updates provided, including for those pupils with SEND and for LGBT pupils. Pupils with SEND are highlighted on the tracker to ensure the school takes into account fully their needs when investigating bullying.

Pupils and parents are made clear of the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders. The school uses educational opportunities such as lessons, Relationships, Sex & Health Education (RSHE), assemblies, projects, drama, stories, literature and debates to discuss the differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice-based language.

Implementation

The following steps may be taken when dealing with incidents:

- if bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached
- a clear account of the incident will be recorded and given to the Headmistress or Deputy Head
- The Headmistress or Deputy Head will interview all concerned and will record the incident
- form teachers will be kept informed and if it persists the form teacher will advise the appropriate subject teachers
- parents will be kept informed
- punitive and restorative measures will be used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties concerned

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

- offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a form tutor or member of staff of their choice
- reassuring the pupil and offering on-going support
- restoring self-esteem and confidence

Pupils who have bullied will be helped by:

- discussing what happened and why the pupil became involved
- establishing the wrongdoing and need to change
- informing parents or guardians to help change the attitude of the pupil
- a note will be put on their file to enable the school to identify any trends

Any deliberate exposure of a pupil to an allergen, threat of allergen exposure, or persistent allergy-related bullying will be treated as a serious incident and may warrant suspension, exclusion or referral under safeguarding procedures where appropriate.

Disciplinary steps will be taken which reflect the seriousness of the incident and convey a deterrent effect (strong sanctions such as exclusion may be necessary in cases of severe and persistent bullying). The following disciplinary steps can be taken within the framework of the school's Rewards and Sanctions Policy:

- official warnings to cease offending
- detention
- final official warning in the presence of parents
- fixed-term exclusion or permanent exclusion

Monitoring, evaluation and review

The school will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

Discrimination, Prejudice-based Bullying and the Equality Act 2010

Bullying behaviour can often be rooted in prejudice and discrimination due to difference or a perceived difference. We are committed to challenging discrimination, prejudice-based bullying and language, and to fulfilling our duty under the Equality Act 2010. The Equality Act 2010 sets out rights which include legal protection from discrimination to any of the nine protected characteristics: disability; race; sex (gender); pregnancy/maternity; religion/belief; sexual orientation; gender re-assignment; age; marriage/civil partnership. We recognise that children and young people can also experience bullying in relation to: asylum seeker or refugee status; body image; being care experienced; social or economic status; young carer responsibilities; imprisonment of parents/carers, siblings, or other family members. We recognise that children and young people can experience disadvantage, prejudice or discrimination because of any of these individual factors or a combination of factors.

Allergy-Related Bullying

The school recognises that pupils with food allergies, anaphylaxis and other medical conditions may be vulnerable to bullying, teasing, intimidation, social exclusion or threatening behaviour relating to their condition. This may include deliberately exposing a pupil to an allergen, threatening to do so, making jokes about an allergy, excluding pupils from activities because of their allergy, or using allergy-related language to cause distress.

Solefield School regards allergy-related bullying as a serious safeguarding and medical welfare concern. Any incident involving the deliberate use, threat or misuse of allergens against another pupil will be treated as a serious breach of the school's Behaviour Policy and may result in significant disciplinary sanctions.

To reduce the risk of allergy-related bullying, the school:

- promotes awareness and understanding of allergies and anaphylaxis through pastoral and health education programmes;
- fosters an inclusive culture where medical conditions are respected;
- ensures staff are alert to signs of allergy-related bullying or discrimination;
- encourages pupils and parents to report concerns promptly;
- records and investigates all reports of allergy-related bullying;
- provides support for affected pupils and their families; and
- works with parents, healthcare professionals and staff to maintain safe and supportive learning environments.

The school's approach reflects current government expectations regarding allergy awareness and the protection of pupils with medical conditions. Staff will take prompt and appropriate action where behaviour places a pupil's physical or emotional wellbeing at risk.

Cyberbullying

The Headmistress is responsible for the online safety of the school community. Cyberbullying is dealt with in line with other bullying and can be seen as a safeguarding issue. The school has an ICT Acceptable Use for Pupils Policy and pupils are given regular guidance regarding use of the internet and cyberbullying.

What is cyberbullying?

"Cyberbullying is an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself."

Seven categories of cyberbullying have been identified:

- Text message bullying involves sending unwelcome texts that are threatening or cause discomfort.
- Picture/video-clip bullying via mobile phone cameras is used to make the child being bullied feel threatened or embarrassed, with images usually sent to other people. 'Happy slapping' involves filming and sharing physical attacks.
- Phone call bullying via mobile phone uses silent calls or abusive messages. Sometimes the

bullied child's phone is stolen and used to harass others, who then think the phone owner is responsible. As with all mobile phone bullying, the perpetrators often disguise their numbers, sometimes using someone else's phone to avoid being identified.

- Email bullying uses email to send bullying or threatening messages, often using a pseudonym for anonymity or using someone else's name to pin the blame on them.
- Chat room bullying involves sending menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in a web-based chat room. Bullying through instant messaging (IM) is

an Internet-based form of bullying where children and young people are sent unpleasant messages as they conduct real-time conversations online.

- Bullying via websites includes the use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal polling sites. There has also been a significant increase in social networking sites for young people, which can provide new opportunities for cyberbullying

During the school day pupils only have access to the internet through the school's system which has filters to prevent the use of social media. The Headmistress & DSL scrutinise all internet use each week at SLT and are alerted as soon as any filter is tested by staff or pupils.

Pupils are given guidance on how to stay safe online through RSHE, ICT lessons, form time and assemblies.

Staff guidance is given through the school's employment manual.

Staff receive training through regular safeguarding and anti-bullying training.

Pupils know that they should report any incidents of bullying immediately to any member of staff.

Staff report incidents to the Headmistress.

The school writes regularly to parents to give them guidance on the school's mobile phone rules as listed above. The school encourages all members of the community, pupils, staff, Solefield local governors, governors and parents to help prevent bullying, especially when they find themselves as bystanders. The school organises sessions for parents to inform them of how to protect their children online.

The school processes and protects personal data in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018

Pupils are given clear guidance on the use of mobile technology in school and frequent reminders:

The following guidelines are written to protect all pupils in the school:

1. The School strongly advises that mobile phones should not be brought into school at all. Students have no legitimate need to use a mobile phone at all during the school day.
2. The School accepts that there may be particular circumstances in which a parent wishes their child to have a mobile phone for their journey to and from school.
3. Only pupils who have written permission from their parents to walk home may bring a mobile phone to school.
4. Phones must be handed in to the school office on arrival at school.
5. Phones should be collected at 4pm from the school office.
6. Whilst on school grounds:
 - a. Phones and other devices may NOT be used at school without the express permission of a member of staff.
 - b. Pupils may NOT use their devices to take photographs, movies or to record sound.
 - c. Pupils may NOT use their devices to access the internet without permission.
7. Electronic devices may NOT be taken on school trips.
8. At the discretion of the Headmistress, any pupil not adhering to the rules above will no longer be able to bring an electronic to school. Depending on the seriousness of the breach of these rules the pupil may also be subject to the school's sanctions up to and including suspension and expulsion.

9. Activity trackers may be worn but will be confiscated and returned to parents should they prove a distraction.
10. The school strongly discourages parents from sending pupils into school with smartwatches or similar. In this case the device should only be used as an activity tracker and/or watch. Any pupil found messaging or using the device for similar activities will have their watch confiscated and returned to parents. They will not be allowed to bring a similar device into school again with the school observing a zero-tolerance approach.
11. The school accepts no responsibility for damage to a pupil's mobile phone, smartwatch or tracker, however caused.

Helen McClure Headmistress

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