



ABINGDON
HOUSE SCHOOL

Anti-Bullying Policy

Responsible Person: Deputy Headteacher

Last Review Date: February 2025

Next Review Date: February 2026

Abingdon House School, Purley (AHSP) is owned and operated by Cavendish Education.

This policy is one of a series of school policies that, taken together, are designed to form a comprehensive statement of the school's aspiration to provide an outstanding education for each of its students and of the mechanisms and procedures in place to achieve this.

Accordingly, this policy should be read alongside these policies. In particular it should be read in conjunction with the policies covering equality and diversity, Health and Safety, safeguarding and child protection.

All of these policies have been written, not simply to meet statutory and other requirements, but to enable and evidence the work that the whole school is undertaking to ensure the implementation of its core values.

While this current policy document may be referred to elsewhere in AHSP documentation, including particulars of employment, it is non-contractual.

In the school's policies, unless the specific context requires otherwise, the word "parent" is used in terms of Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 as updated, which states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a biological parent but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child. Department for Education guidance Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility updated August 2023 considers a 'parent' to include:
all biological parents, whether they are married or not

any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

The school employs the services of, among others, the following consulting companies to ensure regulatory compliance and the implementation of best practice:

Peninsula BrightHR
Peninsula Health and Safety
Atlantic Data (DBS)
Educare (online CPD)
SchoolPro (data protection)
Marsh Commercial (insurance)
VWV (legal)

AHSP is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, pupils and visitors to share this commitment.

All outcomes generated by this document must take account of and seek to contribute to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at AHSP.

The policy documents of AHSP are revised and published periodically in good faith. They are inevitably subject to revision. On occasions a significant revision, although promulgated in school separately, may have to take effect before the scheduled re-publication of a set of policy documents. Care should therefore be taken to ensure, by consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, that the details of any policy document are still effectively current at a particular moment.

Purpose of this Policy

Bullying can be described as being “a deliberate act done to cause distress in order to give a feeling of power, status or other gratification to the bully. Bullying can range from ostracising, name-calling, teasing, threats and extortion, through to physical intimidation, assault on persons and/or their property. It can be an unresolved single incident that casts a shadow over a child’s life, or a series of such incidents. Bullying is often aimed at certain groups, for example because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.”

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and inclusive environment where all of our children can learn in a safe and productive environment. The school culture is one of positive relationships, empathy and respect for diversity and bullying of any sort will not be tolerated.

Interpersonal skills, relationship building and conflict resolution are regular parts of our wellbeing,

Aims

AHSP believes that every member of its community has the right to be safe and happy and to feel that they will be protected if they feel vulnerable.

All members of the School community must be aware that bullying is always unacceptable. The School community wishes to foster an environment where caring and supportive relationships allow individuals to flourish without fear.

We want to promote tolerance and to ensure that students are understanding of one another's rights and responsibilities; and that it is unlawful to discriminate against someone because of their: sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity.

Types of Bullying

There are many different types of bullying. The main types are listed below. In practice, they often overlap. Some examples of the types of behaviour which fit into each group are given below. The list is not exhaustive.

Physical

Hitting, kicking, taking or hiding belongings (including money).

Verbal

Name-calling, teasing, insulting, chanting and joke-telling at another's expense. We also consider that unwanted phone messages or voicemail messages from mobile phones or landline phones constitute bullying behaviour.

Written

Graffiti, writing on people's belongings and schoolwork, signs and symbols left on desks or lockers and unwanted emails and texting.

Cyber

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology. Electronic technology includes devices and equipment such as mobile phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text/photo messages, chat, and websites.

Emotional

Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, spreading rumours, intimidating looks.

Gestures

Unkind signs and looks, pointing and sniggering, laughing behind someone's back, turning one's back on someone, or shrugging shoulders with the intention of making someone feel left out or excluded.

Sexual Harassment/Sexual Violence/Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Sexual harassment is 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a person's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment. Any incident of sexual harassment will be dealt with in line with this policy, our [Safeguarding Policy](#) and our [Sexual Harassment Policy](#).

Bullying is behaviour which makes other people feel uncomfortable, embarrassed, threatened or left out. It is not the ordinary give-and-take of school life, which may include disagreements, joking and friendly teasing. Similarly, excluding someone from an activity occasionally does not constitute bullying, provided it is not part of a deliberate attempt to be unkind and has not been done in an unpleasant way.

What the School is Doing About Bullying

At Abingdon House School, Purley, every student has the right to learn in a safe, secure and kind environment and all members of the School community have a responsibility to ensure that this occurs. In line with our vision and ethos, dealings with regard to misbehaviour and bullying will employ a restorative approach. Concerns raised around bullying are recorded in our bullying log.

We explicitly teach about the protected characteristics and will record where students behave in a way that discriminates against any of these groups.

Whistle Blowing

We are a 'telling school' where students will always be encouraged to inform staff of any incidents or behaviours that are not in line with our positive school ethos. Should bullying occur, students will know that, by telling, the situation will be dealt with promptly and effectively and that anyone who knows about any bullying is to be expected to inform staff.

While we encourage all students to report concerns directly to staff, and support them in doing so, we recognise there may be situations or barriers for some students in regularly doing this.

Students who are bullied must be assured that their concerns are being taken seriously. They will have the opportunity to discuss them with a Teacher, Therapist, or another member of staff. A multidisciplinary approach is critical due to the range of social communication and interaction challenges most of our students have. They will be given a range of options. Once they are familiar with the possibilities, they will be encouraged to choose one of them.

They will then be given support and shown the strategies by means of which they can deal with their option effectively. In serious cases of bullying the School will conduct a formal investigation, and sanctions imposed in line with the Behavioural Policy. The School will

always be alert to identify the threshold at which bullying may become a Child Protection matter, at which point it will be formally referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will take things forward in line with the School's safeguarding procedures.

Students who use bullying behaviour will be helped to see that their actions are totally unacceptable and have serious, possibly long-term, consequences. Help and support will be ongoing and monitoring will take place. Should the behaviour not improve, disciplinary action will occur.

Where appropriate the parents of victims and of perpetrators will be informed of what has happened and invited to come to School to discuss the issue. When bullying occurs directly because of a protected characteristic parents will be informed immediately (as will the Headteacher).

Preventative Measures

Many students at AHSP have social communication needs, which can impact relationship building, socialisation and the reading of visual and verbal cues. To support students with this, we run social skills classes as well as small group therapy sessions. Mediation and restorative conversations and interventions take place on a regular basis, to support the learning of appropriate socialising skills and conflict mediation.

Development of the wellbeing of all members of our School community is an integral aspect of the ethos of AHSP and is embedded in all aspects of our daily routine. This will involve the teaching of kindness and positive personal interactions and will, therefore, be an ongoing topic of staff and student development every year. Staff are aware of the actions which can cause distress and make someone feel that they are being bullied (including the protected characteristics) and that this can be addressed in many areas of the curriculum and general life of the School, including:

- The ethos and values of the School as embodied in the Behaviour Policy;
- Assemblies;
- PSHE sessions;
- Social Skills, and Life Skills lessons;
- The School's pastoral structures, and taking opportunities to reinforce the School's counter bullying message and commitment to wellbeing within all lessons.

Positive approach

AHSP, as a school, wants a complete absence of bullying. While this may seem an unattainable aspiration, it is our belief that the strategies we are putting in place will go a long way towards achieving this.

- Staff will be trained in working with all students to help them gain an understanding of how their behaviour impacts others and to provide them with strategies and targets for improvement.

- Bullying will be discussed throughout the year with each class and the children will be encouraged to discuss strategies for dealing with bullying.
- Parents will be informed of interventions that are taking place with their child so that they can support the positive behaviour focus and inform the school of progress occurring outside of school
- In cases where these interventions do not result in changing the bullying behaviour, a more discipline-focused approach will need to occur. Meetings with parents, students and staff will occur and behavioural contracts agreed upon, with clear consequences set out, such as removal from play time, removal from lessons, suspensions or exclusions.
- AHSP will provide training and ongoing education to staff and students about cyberbullying and its dangers and will remain vigilant over the appropriate use of social media and IT.