Grove School

Anti-bullying Policy

Mission statement:

“Enjoy, learn, achieve”

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This policy has been developed with reference to current legislation and national guidance, including:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004;
- Department for Education, Preventing and Tackling Bullying;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;
- Behaviour in Schools;
- Teaching Online Safety in Schools;
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England, including Pupil Movement, July 2026;
- Online Safety Act 2023;
- The school's Behaviour Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Online Safety Policy, Equality Information and Objectives, SEND Policy and Complaints Procedure.

DfE Guidance - Teaching online safety in schools - Updated 12 January 2023

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1. Legal requirements

Every school must have measures in place to prevent all forms of bullying.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 provides that maintained schools must have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying among pupils. These measures should be part of the school's behaviour policy which must be communicated to all pupils, school staff, parents and carers.

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Schools must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty and have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

The school will take appropriate action to prevent and respond to discriminatory and prejudice-related behaviour. It will also make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils where required.

Safeguarding children and young people under the Children Act 1989

A bullying incident may also constitute a safeguarding concern. If a member of staff has any concern that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, harm, the concern must be reported immediately to a designated safeguarding lead and dealt with in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Where appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead will consider early help, consultation with Birmingham Children's Trust, a referral to children's social care, advice from the police or support from another relevant agency. Staff must not wait for bullying to be repeated before reporting a safeguarding concern.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 sets out schools' legal safeguarding duties, including responding to concerns about children, child-on-child abuse, information sharing, online safety and the role of the DSL.

Bullying that may constitute a criminal offence

Some bullying behaviour may constitute a criminal offence. Examples may include violence, assault, theft, threatening communications, repeated harassment or intimidation, criminal damage and hate crime.

Where staff believe that an offence may have been committed, or that a child may be at immediate risk, the designated safeguarding lead and headteacher will consider whether to seek advice from, or make a referral to, the police or another appropriate agency. In an emergency, the school will contact the police on 999.

Relevant legislation may include the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, Communications Act 2003, Malicious Communications Act 1988 and Online Safety Act 2023. The school will seek appropriate advice rather than attempting to determine whether a criminal offence has been committed.

2. Our aims and principles

Mission statement:

"Enjoy, learn, achieve"

As pupils, staff, parents, carers and visitors:

- We treat others as we would like to be treated
- We are kind and don't hurt others or their feelings
- We respect all property
- We always try to do our best
- We are honest and tell the truth
- We are good listeners and thoughtful speakers

At Grove School we acknowledge that bullying does happen from time to time – indeed, it would be unrealistic to claim that it does not.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that pupils can learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of bullying.

Bullying is antisocial behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Only when all issues are addressed will pupils be able to benefit from the opportunities available at school.

This policy aims to:

- Ensure that all children and staff within school have a common understanding of what bullying is.
- Ensure staff take all incidents of bullying seriously.
- Minimise all forms of bullying.
- Communicate clearly to children, parents and carers the school's strong response.
- Ensure children understand that incidents of bullying will be dealt with promptly and effectively.
- Stress that the whole-school community acts together on this issue.
- Continually work to maintain a warm and harmonious atmosphere within school.

The school does not tolerate bullying. All reports will be taken seriously, investigated fairly and responded to promptly. Actions will be appropriate, proportionate, consistent with the school's Behaviour Policy and focused on stopping the behaviour, protecting those affected and reducing the likelihood of recurrence.

Principles:

- All allegations of bullying will be carefully investigated.
- Pupils', parents, carers and staff will be encouraged to talk openly about the issue.
- All reports and allegations of bullying, including the outcome of the school's response, will be recorded on the school's agreed recording system (CPOMS).
- As part of our RHE and computing curriculum, children will develop an age-appropriate understanding of bullying in all its forms. They will be taught how to seek help and respond safely if they experience or witness bullying.
- Children will be taught strategies to help them deal with bullying situations which they may encounter.
- Staff will respond calmly and consistently to allegations or incidents of bullying.
- Staff will investigate incidents of bullying and take steps to resolve the matter.
- Parents and carers of the children directly involved will be informed at an appropriate stage however where contacting a parent or carer may increase the risk to a child, the designated safeguarding lead will determine how and when information should be shared.
- The school will not normally disclose confidential information about another child, including details of sanctions or individual support arrangements.
- The school will protect and support the children involved during the school day, during extracurricular activities and, where appropriate, in relation to off-site behaviour while concerns are investigated and addressed.

3. What is bullying?

Bullying is the intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group where there is an imbalance of power. It is usually repeated over time. Bullying may be physical, verbal, emotional, discriminatory or online.

The imbalance of power may be physical, psychological, social, technological or related to access to information, status or popularity.

A one-off incident may not meet the school's definition of bullying, but it can still be serious. It will be recorded and addressed under the Behaviour Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy or another relevant school procedure. The school will not wait for behaviour to be repeated where there is a safeguarding concern or a risk of harm.

Bullying is, therefore:

- Deliberately hurtful
- Repeated, often over a period of time
- Difficult to defend against

Bullying can include:

TYPE OF BULLYING	DEFINITION
Emotional	Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
Physical	Hitting, kicking, pushing, taking another's belongings, any use of violence
Prejudice-based and discriminatory, including: • Racial • Faith-based • Gendered (sexist) • Homophobic/biphobic • Transphobic • Disability-based	Taunts, gestures, graffiti or physical abuse focused on a particular characteristic (e.g. gender, race, sexuality)
Sexual	Explicit sexual remarks, display of sexual material, sexual gestures, unwanted physical attention, comments about sexual reputation or performance, or inappropriate touching
Direct or indirect verbal	Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
Online bullying	Bullying that takes place online, such as through social networking sites, messaging apps or gaming sites

Some behaviour described in this section may also constitute child-on-child abuse or another safeguarding concern. Such behaviour will be reported immediately to a DSL and managed under the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. The school will not wait for behaviour to be repeated before taking safeguarding action.

Prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying:

The school will challenge prejudice-related and discriminatory language used by pupils, staff, parents, carers or visitors. All such incidents will be recorded and reviewed, whether or not they meet the school's definition of bullying. Parents and carers of the children directly involved will be informed, as appropriate.

This includes the following areas listed above:

- Homophobic Language (terms of abuse used towards lesbian, gay and bisexual people or those thought to be LGB)
- Racist Language (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)
- Faith-based or religiously prejudiced language
- Sexist language

All discriminatory and prejudice-related incidents will be challenged, recorded and reviewed, whether or not they meet the school's definition of bullying. The school will consider whether an incident is connected to an actual or perceived protected characteristic, or to a child's association with another person.

Responses will be educational and proportionate, while taking account of the seriousness of the behaviour, its effect, the child's age and understanding, any previous incidents and any safeguarding considerations.

Hate crime:

Although there is no single criminal offence called "hate crime", the term is used where an offence involves demonstrated or motivated hostility connected with one or more recognised characteristics.

The police and the CPS (Crown Prosecution Service) have an agreed definition of hate crime: ***"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 disability or perceived disability; race or perceived race; religion or perceived religion; sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation; or transgender identity or perceived transgender identity."***

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."

However, a hate incident does not technically mean that the law has been broken. Information on how to report a hate crime can be found at https://www.report-it.org.uk/home

4. Signs and symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that they are being bullied. All staff, parents and carers should be vigilant and be aware of the following signs:

- Pupils may show changes in behaviour such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences, clinging to parents, carers or staff or showing an unwillingness to go into the playground during playtimes and lunchtimes.
- Pupils may be isolated in the playground.
- They may be unwilling to walk to and from school by themselves.
- Pupils may display changes in patterns of work such as lacking concentration, withdrawing or truanting from school.
- Pupils may suffer from low self-esteem and lack of confidence.
- Pupils may appear anxious and frightened most of the time.
- Pupils may appear tearful.
- Pupils may have unexplained scratches and bruises.
- Pupils may have sudden outbursts of poor behaviour or aggression.

These signs and behaviours may indicate bullying but they may also indicate another difficulty or safeguarding concern. Staff should respond with professional curiosity, speak to the child in an appropriate manner and report any safeguarding concern to a DSL without delay.

5. Whole-school strategies to minimise bullying

- All staff, including lunchtime supervisors, will remain vigilant for changes in children's behaviour, presentation, friendships and participation that may indicate bullying or another concern.
- Restorative approaches may be considered when they are safe, appropriate and likely to benefit the children involved. Participation will not be forced. A child who has experienced bullying will not be required to meet, confront or mediate with another child as a condition of receiving support.
- A regular programme of RHE, citizenship and computing work supports this policy.
- Staff provide regular, age-appropriate opportunities to discuss friendships, respectful relationships, bullying and playtime concerns, including through RHE lessons and MyHappyMind sessions.
- Children will be taught how to support a peer safely, avoid joining in and report concerns to a trusted adult. Children will not be expected to intervene physically or place themselves at risk.
- The school operates a peer buddy system to support children who are new to Grove.
- A school anti-bullying code is in use, giving clear advice to children on what to do if they are a witness or a victim of bullying.
- The school participates in Anti-Bullying Week annually to raise awareness and reinforce key messages.
- Anti-bullying themes are addressed through collective worship at appropriate points during the school year.
- The school will provide appropriate levels of supervision, with particular attention to locations and times identified through incident monitoring as presenting a higher risk.
- The school's Online Safety Policy and Acceptable Use Agreements support the prevention of online bullying.
- The school's IT systems are subject to appropriate filtering and monitoring arrangements overseen by the school and its technical support provider (NSOptimum).
- Information about Childline and other age-appropriate sources of support will be displayed and made accessible to pupils.
- The school will seek support from appropriate external agencies where necessary, including the City of Birmingham School and Educational Psychology Service.

6. Additional vulnerability and reasonable adjustments

Some children may be more vulnerable to bullying or may face additional barriers to reporting it. This may include children with SEND, disabilities, communication needs, English as an additional language, care experience, social care involvement, medical needs or other circumstances affecting their ability to communicate or seek help.

The school will make reasonable adjustments to reporting, investigation and support arrangements. These may include the use of a trusted adult, visual prompts, symbols, communication aids, an interpreter, additional processing time or support from the SENCO. A child's behaviour, communication difference or additional need will never be treated as a justification for bullying.

7. How the school responds to reports and allegations of bullying

7.1 Reporting a concern

Children may report bullying to any trusted adult in school. This may include:

- their class teacher
- a teaching assistant
- a lunchtime supervisor
- the designated safeguarding lead
- a senior leader
- any other adult employed by the school

A child may also ask a friend to help them report a concern. A child who receives information about bullying should pass it to a trusted adult and should not be expected to investigate it.

7.2 Initial response

The member of staff receiving the report will:

- Listen calmly and take the concern seriously.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by speaking.
- Make clear that the behaviour is not the child's fault.
- Establish whether anyone is at immediate risk.
- Take immediate action to help keep the children involved safe without delay.
- Explain that the information will be shared with those who need to help.
- Make a factual record using the school's agreed recording system.
- Inform the class teacher and appropriate senior leader.
- Inform a DSL immediately if there is a safeguarding concern.

Staff must not promise complete confidentiality.

7.3 Investigation

The school will appoint an appropriate member of staff to investigate the concerns. Depending on the seriousness or complexity of the concern, this may be the class teacher, year-group leader, assistant headteacher, a DSL or a senior leader.

The investigating member of staff will:

- Speak separately to the children involved.
- Speak to relevant witnesses.
- Consider previous incidents and possible patterns of behaviour.
- Consider written, electronic or other relevant evidence.
- Consider the effect of the behaviour on the child.
- Take account of age, development, SEND, disability, communication needs and language needs.
- Establish whether the behaviour meets the school's definition of bullying.
- Consider whether the behaviour is a safeguarding concern or another breach of the school's Behaviour Policy.
- Record the findings, decisions, actions and reasons for those decisions using the school's agreed reporting system (CPOMS).

The school will put in place any temporary arrangements required to keep the children involved safe. These may relate to supervision, movement around school, playtimes, lunchtimes and transitions. Individual circumstances will determine the precise arrangements, which will be reviewed regularly. Individual circumstances will determine the precise arrangements to be made.

Children will not be required to confront one another as part of the investigation.

7.4 Outcomes and actions

Where bullying is substantiated, the school will:

- Take steps to stop the behaviour.
- Agree appropriate safety arrangements.
- Support the child who has experienced bullying.
- Work with the child who has displayed bullying behaviour.
- Consider an educational, restorative, pastoral or disciplinary response.
- Inform parents and carers as appropriate.
- Record the action taken.
- Set a date to review whether the behaviour has stopped.

In serious or persistent cases, the headteacher may consider suspension or permanent exclusion in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy and statutory guidance. No outcome will be predetermined before the concern has been investigated.

7.5 Follow-up and review
The school will monitor the situation after the initial response. Follow-up will include checking:

- Whether the bullying has stopped.
- Whether the child feels safe.
- Whether there has been retaliation.
- Whether safety arrangements remain necessary.
- Whether additional pastoral, SEND or safeguarding support is required.
- Whether parents and carers need a further update.

8. Off-site bullying

The school may respond to bullying that takes place away from the school premises, including on the journey to or from school, on public transport, during an educational visit or online, where the behaviour involves pupils from the school or has an effect on pupils' safety, wellbeing, relationships or education in school.

The school will decide what action is reasonable in the circumstances and may work with parents, carers, other schools, the local authority, children's social care, platform providers or the police.

9. Advice and guidance for parents and carers

If your child has experienced bullying:

- Calmly talk with your child about their experiences.
- Make a note of what your child says including who was involved, how often the bullying has occurred, where it happened and what happened.
- Reassure your child that they have done the right thing to tell you about the bullying.
- Explain to your child that should any further incidents occur they should report them to a teacher immediately.
- Make an appointment to see your child's teacher.
- Explain to the teacher the problems your child is experiencing.

If your child is displaying bullying behaviours:

- Talk with your child and explain that what they are doing is unacceptable and makes other children unhappy.
- Discourage other members of your family from bullying behaviour or from using aggression or force to get what they want.
- Show your child how they can join in with other children without bullying.
- Make an appointment to see your child's teacher and explain the problems your child is experiencing as well as discussing how you can work together to stop them bullying others.
- Regularly check with your child how things are going at school.

- Give your child lots of praise and encouragement when they are cooperative or kind to other people.

If your child is experiencing bullying online:

- Listen calmly and reassure your child that they have done the right thing by telling you.
- Advise your child not to reply, retaliate or forward the content.
- Record appropriate evidence, such as dates, usernames, web addresses or screenshots.
- Do not ask your child to continue viewing harmful content simply to gather evidence.
- Use the platform's reporting, blocking and muting tools.
- Review privacy and security settings with your child.
- Inform the school where the behaviour involves pupils from the school or is affecting your child's safety, wellbeing or education.
- Report safeguarding concerns to the appropriate service.
- Contact the police on 999 if a child is in immediate danger.
- Provide age-appropriate supervision, maintain open conversations about online activity and use suitable parental controls and privacy settings.

Parents and carers should initially raise concerns with the class teacher. If the matter is serious, ongoing or unresolved, they may contact the phase or year-group leader, designated safeguarding lead or a senior leader. A member of staff will acknowledge receipt of any concerns and provide an initial response on the same working day that the concern is raised.

If a parent or carer is dissatisfied with the way the school has handled the concern, they may use the school's published Complaints Procedure. A complaint about the school's response will not prevent the school from continuing to safeguard and support the children involved.

10. Support and advice for pupils

If you see someone being bullied:

- DON'T confront the child or place yourself at risk.
- DO tell a teacher or trusted adult.
- DO try to be a kind, supportive friend to the person being bullied.
- DON'T join in.
- DON'T be a bystander – do not join in, laugh, share harmful content or encourage the behaviour.

If you are experiencing bullying:

- TELL a teacher or trusted adult in school as soon as possible.
- TELL your family.
- TAKE a friend with you if you are scared to tell someone by yourself.
- KEEP telling people until someone listens.
- DON'T blame yourself for what has happened.
- DON'T copy the bullying behaviour.
- DON'T be frightened to tell a teacher or another adult in school, remember, they are here to help you.
- TELL, TELL, TELL!

If you are experiencing bullying online:

- Do not reply, retaliate or forward the content.
- Tell a trusted adult straight away.
- Block or mute the account where it is safe to do so.
- Use the platform's reporting tools.
- Save appropriate evidence, such as the date, username, web address or a screenshot, with support from an adult.
- Do not continue viewing or copying upsetting material simply to gather evidence.
- Ask an adult to help you review your privacy and security settings.

When talking to an adult about bullying, try to explain:

- What has happened to you.
- How often it has happened.
- Who was involved.
- Who saw what was happening.
- Where it happened.
- What you have done about it already.
- Write the incident down.

Remember: It is not your fault. You do not have to deal with bullying alone. Keep telling a trusted adult until you receive help.

Preventing and responding to online bullying

Staff will work together to raise awareness and promote understanding of online bullying through:

- Ensuring that pupils, staff, parents and carers are aware of the procedures and possible responses to online bullying including incidents that occur outside of school.
- Delivering parental workshops about internet safety.
- Providing information and advice sent home to parents and carers.
- Providing information and guidance for parents, carers and pupils on the school website.
- Addressing online bullying within the computing curriculum.
- Holding regular internet awareness events for staff, pupils, parents and carers.
- Ensuring staff, in particular ECTs and those new to Grove, are given online safety training.

Strategies for preventing and responding to online bullying will be reviewed regularly as technology and patterns of use change.

11. The role of the governing body

The governing body will:

- Approve and review this policy.
- Ensure that it complies with current legislation and statutory guidance.
- Monitor how effectively the school prevents and responds to bullying.
- Receive anonymised information about the number, nature and patterns of incidents.
- Monitor prejudice-related and discriminatory incidents.
- Consider the experiences of vulnerable groups.
- Ensure that appropriate staff training, curriculum provision and resources are available.
- Ensure that the policy is accessible to pupils, staff, parents and carers.
- Avoid involvement in individual reports where this could prejudice a later complaint, suspension or exclusion review.

12. Dignity at work policy

The Governing Body has adopted the Dignity at Work Policy in relation to allegations of bullying and harassment involving members of staff. This policy is reviewed annually by the governing body.

13. Continued professional development

All staff will receive appropriate anti-bullying and safeguarding information as part of induction and regular training. Training will include:

- Recognising and responding to bullying.
- Child-on-child abuse and safeguarding thresholds.
- Prejudice-related and discriminatory incidents.
- Online bullying.
- Recording and information sharing.
- SEND, communication needs, EAL and reasonable adjustments.
- Safe and appropriate use of restorative approaches.

ECTs, new staff, lunchtime supervisors and other relevant staff will receive information appropriate to their roles.

Training needs will be reviewed in response to incident monitoring, changes to guidance and staff feedback.

14. Monitoring of bullying incidents

Senior leaders will review anonymised bullying information at least termly to identify patterns relating to locations, times, year groups, types of behaviour, protected characteristics, recurrence and vulnerable groups.

The school will use incident records, pupil voice, parent feedback, staff feedback, attendance information and safeguarding information to evaluate its provision. The findings will inform supervision, curriculum planning, staff training and school-improvement priorities.

The governing body will receive an anonymised report at least annually.

15. Useful resources for parents, carers and staff

The following websites provide advice and information for parents, carers, pupils and staff:

https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/

https://www.kidscape.org.uk/

https://www.childnet.com/

https://www.familylives.org.uk/

https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/types-bullying/

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/

The following websites provide online safety and online bullying guidance for parents, carers, pupils and staff:

https://www.internetmatters.org/

https://www.ceopeducation.co.uk/

https://contact.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/dealing_with_bullying.pdf

https://saferinternet.org.uk/