Anti-Bullying Policy

REVIEWED BY: United Learning

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Introduction

At George Eliot Academy there is a zero tolerance to bullying.

The aims of this policy are:

- To provide a safe, secure environment where all members of George Eliot community can flourish, thrive and feel a sense of belonging and fulfil their potential.
- To be an integral part of George Eliot's Behaviour Policy.
- To ensure that all members of George Eliot community understand that bullying is not tolerated and the potential actions that may be taken when bullying occurs and understand the role they play in the prevention of bullying.
- To promote George Eliot as an 'upstanding' community.
- To promote George Eliot core value of kindness.
- To be pro-active in the prevention of bullying.
- To raise awareness of what is meant by bullying, the different forms of bullying and the strategies used to prevent bullying. To deal effectively with bullying behaviours if they occur.
- To monitor and evaluate any data on bullying and identify curriculum/training needs for staff and pupils

What does it mean by an upstanding community?

Upstander = someone who recognises when something is wrong AND ACTS to make it right. When an upstander hears/sees someone experiencing bullying behaviour they speak up and report it.

Bystander = someone who sees or knows about bullying behaviour that is happening to someone but takes no actions to address or report it. Pupils are reminded that bystanding in cases of bullying brings part-responsibility on themselves, and that it is every pupil's responsibility to report observed cases of bullying. Pupils who bystand in cases of bullying behaviour and do not pass on what they see will be subject to investigation and possible sanction/s. Pupils must be ready to recognise when behaviour described as 'banter' is an actual case of bullying

Roles and responsibilities of George Eliot community

Pupils

All pupils are attached to a form tutor and able to ask for a check in, to report or seek support. Our staff are available to speak to them every break and lunch time and there is support available throughout the day with any issues that may arise. Some pupils who have additional support have additional staff champions (staff who support) they can ask for to see at breaks/tutor time.
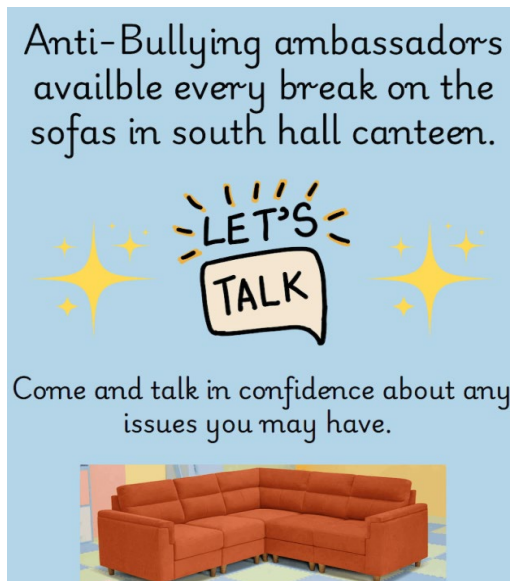
If you are being bullied, witness bullying of someone else or suspect that someone else is being bullied, it is important that you tell someone who may be able to help – be an upstander. This may be a friend, your tutor, a teacher, or any member of the staff you feel you can confide in.

George Eliot Academy has an anti-bullying team:

- Anti-bulling ambassador leaders (Pupils)
- Lead DSL – Mrs Stanton
- SLT support – Miss Havard
- Safeguarding officer-Mrs Sharkey
- School counsellor- Mrs Ferrar
- Heads of year
- Assistant heads of year
- Form tutor
- Character curriculum

Anti-bullying ambassadors

Our Anti bulling ambassadors are pupils across all year groups, they work with the anti-bullying lead to support them to lead anti bullying initiatives. The Antibullying ambassadors lead drop in sessions and offer support every break time.

Anti-Bullying ambassadors availble every break on the sofas in south hall canteen.

LET'S TALK

Come and talk in confidence about any issues you may have.

Other ways to access support:

• Black Boxes

Write it down and put your letter in the black boxes situated in all buildings. Make sure you include your name and all the details about what has happened.

You can also use these boxes to ask to talk to any staff about any concerns you may have.

• **School website**

You can log any concerns by following the link on the school website.

Reporting a concern

Do you feel like you need support from someone in school with any of the following:

- Your mental health?
- Stress or worry that you are feeling?
- Safeguarding (anything to do with your safety or family and friends)?
- Bullying?
- Anything else that is causing you to worry or feel low?

We have post boxes around the school where you can post named or anonymous concerns, or:

Click the button below to contact a trained member of staff so that we can help.

> ⓘ Reporting a Concern

If your concern is urgent and you are using this outside of school hours, then the following organisations are always available to support:

Childline

Childline is a free, private and confidential service where you can talk about anything. Whatever your worry, whenever you need help, we're here for you online, on the phone, anytime. Phone: 0800 1111 or use the online chat app.

Samaritans

Samaritans provides confidential emotional support, 24 hours a day for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which may lead to suicide. You don't have to be suicidal to call us. We are here for you if you're worried about something, feel upset or confused, or you just want to talk to someone. Phone: 116 123

PAPYRUS

Are you, or is a young person you know, not coping with life? For confidential suicide prevention advice contact 0800 0684141. 9am-12am 7 days a week.

• Email

All pupils have access to emails where they can email any staff to report their concerns.

Staff

• Promote a climate where bullying is not tolerated and continually develop best practice based on knowledge of what works.
• Have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in preventing and responding to incidents of bullying.
• Model positive relationships and behaviours.
• Be an upstander - any adult who has concerns about the bullying of a pupil should report this via CPOMS. If bullying or cyberbullying behaviours raises safeguarding concerns, contact the DSL and be aware of the importance of adopting an 'it could happen here' attitude.
• Actively participate in CPD opportunities when directed.

Senior Leadership Team and Governors

• Provide a member of SLT to 'oversee' anti-bullying at George Eliot Academy – this is the Assistant Principal/Vice Principal in charge of behaviour.
• Have a designated safeguarding lead who will escalate incidents to external parties if/when a child's welfare is a cause for concern, this is the Assistant Principal/Vice Principal in charge of behaviour.
• To monitor and evaluate any data on bullying and identify curriculum/training needs for staff and pupils.
• Review of the Academy's Anti-Bullying Policy on an annual basis and update as necessary based on development of curriculum opportunities, national patterns of behaviours.
• To ensure the PSHE and Character Curriculum facilitates pupils to gain knowledge and understanding of core concepts linked to bullying.

Parents/Guardians

• Be an upstander - any parent who has concerns about their child or about any other pupil in the Academy should inform an appropriate member of staff (in most cases this will be the

form tutor or class teacher for that pupil. (Details about lines of communication for parents are available via the Academy's website.)

• Be confident that all reported incidents of bullying will be investigated and dealt with. Be aware that the term 'bullying' is not an umbrella term that can be used for all incidents – bullying behaviour may be isolated incidents and will be dealt with as a behaviour concern.

• Talk to your child about bullying. Empower your child with information and skills in an age-appropriate way before they encounter bullying behaviour.

• LISTEN to your child. Ask questions, but don't interrogate. Avoid treating your child as a victim. Work with the school where appropriate.

• Help your child to build their confidence and self-esteem in other areas.

• Talk with your child's teacher if the bullying is school related. A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school. Contact your child's Form Tutor in the first instance. This can be followed up by contacting their Head of Year or Assistant Head of Year. Mrs Sharkey is the school Anti Bullying Advocate and is also available to offer advice and guidance.

What is bullying – raising awareness

Bullying can be defined as "behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally." (DfE - Preventing and Tackling Bullying).

• Bullying can include name calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, kicking, hitting, the taking of belongings, the production of offensive graffiti, gossiping, excluding individuals from groups, spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.

• Bullying can also include the same unacceptable behaviours as described above but expressed online, sometimes called online or cyberbullying. This can include 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.

• Bullying is recognised as being a form of child-on-child abuse. It can be emotionally abusive and can cause severe and adverse effects on children's emotional development.

• Bullying which is motivated by prejudice is a particular concern, for example racist, sexist and homophobic bullying and bullying related to perceptions about disability and/or special educational needs

Other key terminology linked with aspects of bullying:

Banter

At George Eliot Academy we make it clear that we do not accept banter. At times it can be claimed that hurtful comments are only "banter". Banter is defined as verbal communication between groups of equal power, not the intentional misuse of power to upset another person. However, describing behaviour as "banter" can cause actual cases of bullying to go unreported and be dismissed as insignificant and we educate the pupils about this throughout our curriculum.

Child on child abuse

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE, September 2025) places clear emphasis on the duty of schools and Academies to safeguard against the negative impact on children's welfare, happiness and development caused by *child-on-child abuse*. This term replaces *peer-on-peer abuse* and recognises that abuse can occur between children of any age and gender, both in person and online. KCSIE (2025) states:
"Children can abuse other children. This is generally referred to as child-on-child abuse and can take many forms. This can include (but is not limited to) bullying (including cyber-bullying); prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying; sexual violence and sexual harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise causing physical harm; causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent; sharing of nude or semi-nude images and videos; and initiation/hazing-type violence and rituals."
In line with KCSIE 2025, our Academy also recognises that child-on-child abuse can take place online, including through social media, gaming platforms and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI). This includes the misuse of AI or digital tools to bully, intimidate or humiliate others, create or share harmful, fake or AI-generated content (such as deepfakes or manipulated images), or spread misinformation and disinformation that could harm others. Our approach promotes education, prevention and early intervention, ensuring that pupils understand how to behave responsibly and respectfully both offline and online, and that all incidents are dealt with promptly, sensitively and in accordance with safeguarding and e-safety procedures.

Cyberbullying

In Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for School Leaders, Staff and Governing Bodies (July 2017) it says: "The rapid development of, and widespread access to technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside of school. Cyberbullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click. The Education Act 2011 amended the power in the Education Act 1996 to provide that when an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, has been seized by a member of staff who has been formally authorised by the Headteacher, that staff member can examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone".

At George Eliot Academy we have a no phone policy, pupils' phones are switched off and placed in their bag.

Sexual violence

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE, September 2025) emphasises that schools and colleges must be aware that sexual violence between children can and does occur, both inside and outside of the school environment, and increasingly through online spaces. Such

behaviour constitutes a form of child-on-child abuse. Sexual violence refers to offences as defined in the Sexual Offences Act 2003, including rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault, and causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent. Schools must take all reports of sexual violence seriously, regardless of when or where they occur, and ensure that victims are supported and safeguarded. The 2025 guidance also highlights the growing relevance of digital contexts, where sexual violence can be facilitated or exacerbated by the misuse of technology, including the creation or sharing of sexually explicit or AI-generated content without consent.

Sexual harassment

KCSIE (2025) defines sexual harassment as *"unwanted conduct of a sexual nature"* which can occur both online and offline, and both inside and outside of school or college. Sexual harassment can violate a child's dignity and make them feel intimidated, degraded, or humiliated. Examples include making sexual comments or jokes, sending unwanted sexualised messages, displaying or sharing inappropriate content, deliberately brushing past or touching someone, and online sexual harassment such as the sharing of nude or semi-nude images or videos, "upskirting" (a criminal offence), and coercing or threatening others through digital means.

KCSIE 2025 also warns of emerging AI-related harms, such as the creation or distribution of deepfake or manipulated sexual images, the use of AI chatbots for grooming or exploitation, and the sharing of digitally altered intimate content. Schools must ensure that these behaviours are understood as serious safeguarding concerns, not tolerated or normalised, and that all staff are trained to recognise and respond to such incidents appropriately.

Vulnerable Pupils

It is also the case that some children with protected characteristics are more vulnerable to potential abuse by peers and we recognise the need to acknowledge that some children are more at risk of potential targeting by bullying behaviour. The Academy accepts the definition of bullying as written above and acknowledges what preventing and tackling bullying advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies (July 2017) says about the need to monitor especially certain groups of children: "Some pupils are more likely to be the target of bullying because of the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves. For example, those with special educational needs or disabilities, those who are adopted, those who are suffering from a health problem or those with caring responsibilities may be more likely to experience bullying because of difference... These young people are often the same young people who might need greater support to deal with the impact of bullying, for example those who are going through a personal or family crisis. In addition, children with special educational needs or disabilities can often lack the social or communication skills to report such incidents so it is important that staff are alert to the potential bullying this group faces and that their mechanisms for reporting are accessible to all." From Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for Academy Leaders, Staff and Governing Bodies (July 2017). The Equalities Act 2010 also stipulates that schools are required to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the act.

General awareness of the term bullying

Be aware that the term 'bullying' is not an umbrella term that can be used for all incidents – bullying behaviour may be isolated incidents and will be dealt with as a behaviour concern. For instances where friends may fall out on several occasions over a period, it may not be regarded as bullying. George Eliot Academy works hard to ensure all pupils know the difference between bullying and simply 'falling out'.

We must be careful of the use of the term 'bullying' being used as a term that may be chosen by a party involved in incidents of bullying behaviours to escalate the seriousness of the matter – be aware of the 3 key elements of bullying – repeated, intended and imbalance of power.

Where bullying occurs, it can occur in many places. This can include: the journey to and from George Eliot Academy, before lessons begin, in the corridors, breaktimes and lunchtimes. Toilets and changing rooms are also areas identified as places where bullying occurs. To limit these possibilities George Eliot Academy staff are directed to be on duty in these areas before school, during lesson change over, break, lunch and after school. This provides a physical deterrent but also allow upstanding members of the community to speak to someone in the immediate vicinity if any bullying behaviour occurs.

Signs of bullying

Members of George Eliot Academy community should watch for early signs of distress in pupils as it may be an early indicator of bullying. Members of George Eliot Academy community should be upstanding and report this to a member of staff if they have any concerns.

These may include:

• Fears of walking to/from school
• Fear of going on school transport
• Asks to be driven to school
• Failure of the child to attend school
• Struggles in carrying out usual tasks in school life
• Physical injuries;
• Difficulties with mental health and/or emotional wellbeing
• Becoming withdrawn from school, clubs social situations
• Becoming , shy, experiencing headaches, stomach aches, anxiety and/or panic attacks, suffering from nightmares or poor patterns of sleep
• Broader concerns about behaviour including alcohol or substance misuse
• Changes in appearance or attitude inappropriate to the child's age and previous behaviour; abusive behaviour towards others
• Lateness

Bullying and the law

There is no legal definition of bullying and bullying is not a specific criminal offence but at George Eliot Academy we acknowledge that there are a variety of legislations that assist with bullying and how it can be addressed.

Incidents of bullying can be sanctioned with a range of consequences up to and including expulsion. The Education regulations 2014 – ensure that an effective anti-bullying strategy is drawn up and implemented.

Taken from: Preventing and tackling bullying Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies (July 2017): "When there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm' a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern under the Children Act 1989. Where this is the case, the school staff should discuss with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead and report their concerns to their local authority children's social care and work with them to take appropriate action. This is also laid out in KCSIE 2024.

Taken from: Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges (September 2021) and preventing and tackling bullying advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies (July 2017) and Any child sexual violence/sexual harassment – reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and report their concerns to their local authority children's social care and work with them to take appropriate action. This is also laid out in KCSIE 2024.

Bullying is a clear breach of the Academy's Behaviour Policy and the full range of sanctions available throughout the Academy may be used to deal with cases of bullying were found and confirmed. It should be noted that although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour. Malicious accusations of bullying behaviour, if found to be untrue, will be treated very seriously and involve serious disciplinary sanction.

Actions in cases of bullying:

It is the responsibility of the Academy to deal effectively with cases of bullying on its premises and on official off-site activities. The Academy will address cases of bullying outside its immediate premises, in so far as the behaviour damages the well-being of one or more of its pupils, but it will work in partnership with home and other parties, where the behaviour occurs outside Academy time and activity.

Cases of bullying or suspected bullying will be carefully and thoroughly investigated. All those involved will be given a fair opportunity to talk about the matter with an appropriate person.

Where an incident of bullying is proven, a record of all relevant matters will be kept via CPOMS. Appropriate action will be taken in proven cases of bullying up to and including expulsion from the Academy.

Potential actions in cases of proven bullying – these are to ensure that the bullying behaviour is recognised, and the main aims are to educate to prevent and to also deter future bullying behaviours.
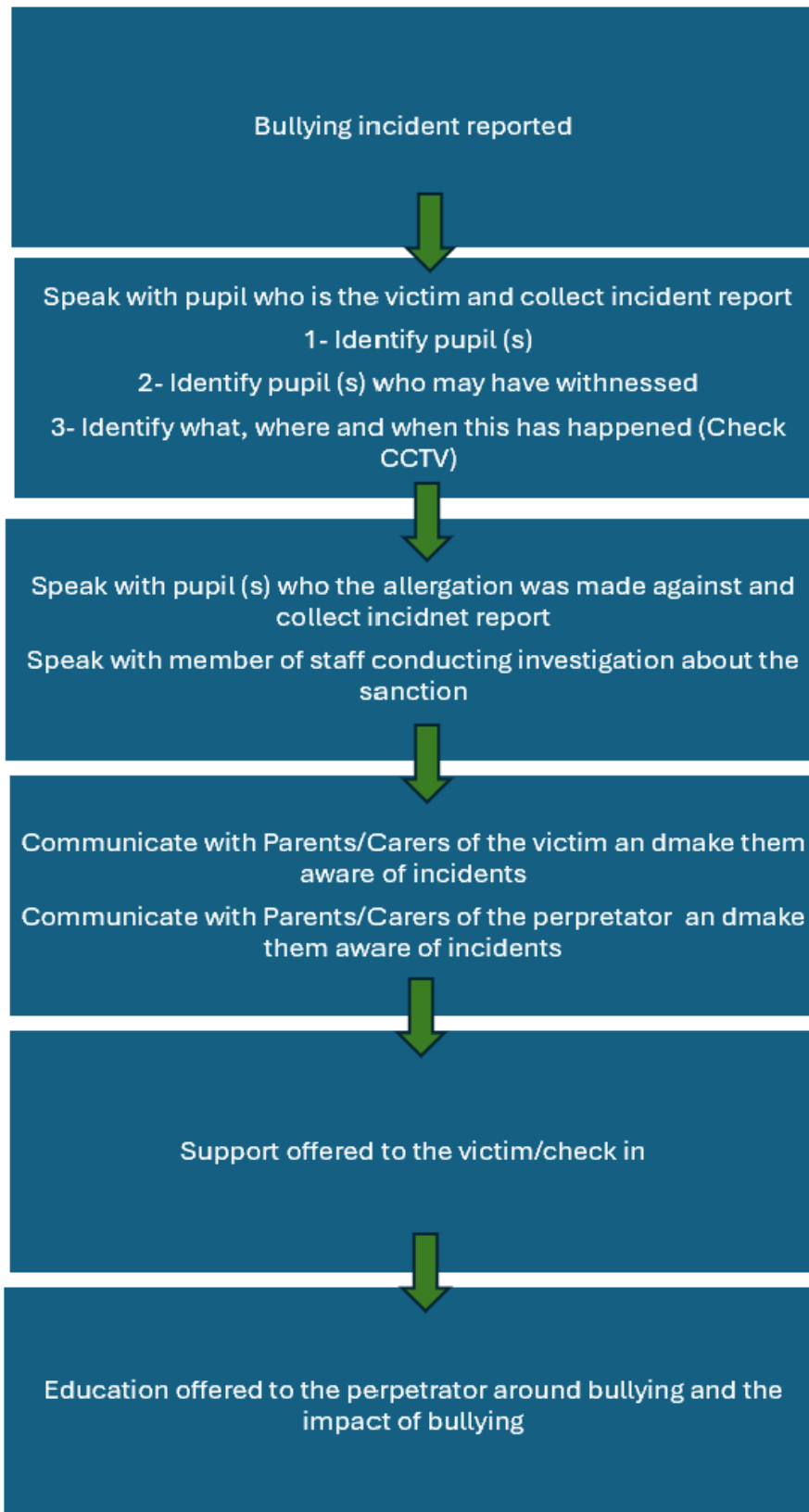
• Educational awareness training
• Conflict resolution
• Mediation Investigations
• Internal exclusion
• Parental meeting
• Mentoring from key staff
• Counselling for both the victim and the perpetrator
• Inclusion intervention programs (e.g Anger Gremlin, Talk About Teenagers)

The school work with a multitude of agencies and regularly access external support

Change, resiliency work has been workshopped with pupils from the health team

We will sign post pupils and parents to resources and support.

The procedures by which the Academy deals with bullying are as follows:

Bullying incident reported

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Speak with pupil who is the victim and collect incident report

1- Identify pupil (s)

2- Identify pupil (s) who may have withnessed

3- Identify what, where and when this has happened (Check CCTV)

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Speak with pupil (s) who the allergation was made against and collect incidnet report

Speak with member of staff conducting investigation about the sanction

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Communicate with Parents/Carers of the victim an dmake them aware of incidents

Communicate with Parents/Carers of the perpretator an dmake them aware of incidents

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Support offered to the victim/check in

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Education offered to the perpetrator around bullying and the impact of bullying

Links to Support and Advice

The following organisations provide support for schools and parents dealing with specific bullying issues including the social, mental or emotional affects caused by bullying.

- **The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA)**

Founded in 2002 by NSPCC and National Children's Bureau, the Anti-Bullying Alliance ABA) brings together over 100 organisations into one network to develop and share good practice across the whole range of bullying issues. The ABA has also put together a fact sheet outlining the range of support that is available to schools and young people from the anti-bullying sector which can be accessed here.

- **Kidscape**

A Charity established to prevent bullying and promote child protection providing advice for young people, professionals and parents about different types of bullying and how to tackle it. Kidscape also offers specialist training and support for school staff, and assertiveness training for young people.

- **Restorative Justice Council:**

Includes best practice guidance for practitioners 2011.

Useful Links and Supporting Organisations

- Childline: www.childline.org.uk
- Family Lives: www.familylives.org.uk
- MindEd: www.minded.org.uk
- NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk
- PSHE Association: www.pshe-association.org.uk
- Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk
- Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk
- Young Carers: www.youngcarers.net

Special Educational Need and Disability

- Changing Faces: www.changingfaces.org.uk
- Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk
- DfE: SEND code of practice

Cyberbullying

- Childnet www.childnet.com
- Internet Watch Foundation www.iwf.org.uk
- Think U Know www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- UK Safer Internet Centre www.saferinternet.org.uk

• The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-council-for-child-internet-safety-ukccis
• DfE - Cyberbullying: Advice for Principals and School Staff
www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying
• DfE - Advice for Parents and Carers on Cyberbullying
www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying

Race, Religion and Nationality

• Anne Frank Trust: www.annefrank.org.uk
• Kick it Out: www.kickitout.org
• Report it: www.report-it.org.uk
• Stop Hate: www.stophateuk.org
• Tell Mama: www.tellmamauk.org
• Educate against Hate: www.educateagainsthate.com
• Show Racism the Red Card: www.srtrc.org/educational

LGBT

• Barnardos LGBT Hub: www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/our_work/lgbtq.htm
• Metro Charity: www.metrocentreonline.org
• EACH: www.eachaction.org.uk
• Proud Trust: www.theproudtrust.org
• Schools Out: www.schools-out.org.uk
• Stonewall: www.stonewall.org.uk

Sexual Harassment and Sexual Bullying

• Ending Violence against Women and Girls (EVAW) www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk
• A Guide for Schools:
www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/data/files/resources/71/EVAWCoalition-SchoolsGuide.pdf
• Disrespect No Body: www.gov.uk/government/publications/disrespectnobodycampaign-posters
• Anti-bullying Alliance: Preventing and responding to Sexual Bullying: Anti-Bullying Alliance
• Anti-bullying Alliance: advice for school staff and professionals about developing effective anti-bullying practice in relation to sexual bullying: Anti-Bullying Alliance

Note: Additional links can be found in Preventing and Tackling Bullying (July 2017)
www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying

Sources and guidance referenced in this policy:

This policy was updated regarding the DfE guidelines:

• Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges (September 2024)
 • Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges (September 2021)
• Preventing and tackling bullying Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies (July 2017)
• Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff (November 2014) 2017)
• No place for bullying: Ofsted (June 2012)