



**George Eliot Academy**

The best in everyone™

Part of United Learning

# Anti-Bullying Policy

REVIEWED BY: United Learning

Date Reviewed: January 2024

Date of next review: January 2025

## Introduction

At The 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 the 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 the 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 the 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 the George Eliot community

### Pupils

All pupils have access to staff through our morning line up routine where they can request a check in to report or seek support. Our staff are available to speak to them every break and lunch time and support available throughout the day with any issues that may arise.

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.

The George Eliot academy has an anti-bullying team:

- Anti-bullying ambassador leaders (Pupils)
- Lead DSL – Miss Havard,
- Safeguarding officer- Mrs McCool
- School counsellor- Mrs Sharkey

- Chaplain- Mr Couves
- Pastoral leaders

### Anti-bullying ambassadors

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



### Other ways to access support:

- **Black Boxes**

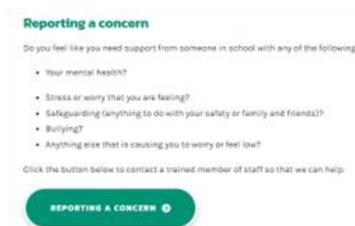
Write it down and put your letter in the black boxes situated in all buildings. Make sure you include your name and all the details about what has happened.

You can also use these boxes to ask to talk to Mrs Sharkey or Mrs McCool about any concerns you may have.



- **School website**

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



- **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 the George Eliot Academy – this is Miss Havard.
- 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 Miss Havard.
- 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 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 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 Pastoral Lead. 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 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 (Sep 2023) places emphasis on the duty for academies to guard against the negative impact on children’s welfare, happiness and development, caused by child on child abuse. In Annex A of KCSIE (Sep 2023). The term child on child abuse replaces peer on peer abuse. The following is stated: “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 cyberbullying); sexual violence and sexual harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexting and initiating/hazing type violence and rituals.”

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

### **Sexual violence**

Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges (September 2021) states that it is important that schools are aware of sexual violence and the fact that children can and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way and it can happen both inside and outside of school. When referring to sexual violence in this we do so in context of child on child sexual violence and links to sexual violence offences which are also part of the sexual offences act 2003. This includes rape, assault by penetration. Sexual assault and causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent.

## **Sexual harassment**

Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges (September 2021) states that when referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur on line and off line and both inside/outside of school. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, make them feel intimidated, degraded, or humiliated. Examples of sexual harassment include: sexual comments, sexual jokes, physical behaviour eg deliberately brushing past someone, online sexual harassment, sharing of nude/semi-nude images and videos, up skirting (criminal offence)

## **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 also 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 of time, it may not be regarded as bullying. The 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 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 the George Eliot academy community should watch for early signs of distress in pupils as it may be an early indicator of bullying. Members of the 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, 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

## **Bullying and the law**

There is no legal definition of bullying and bullying is not a specific criminal offence but at the 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 2023.

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 2023.

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 where 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.

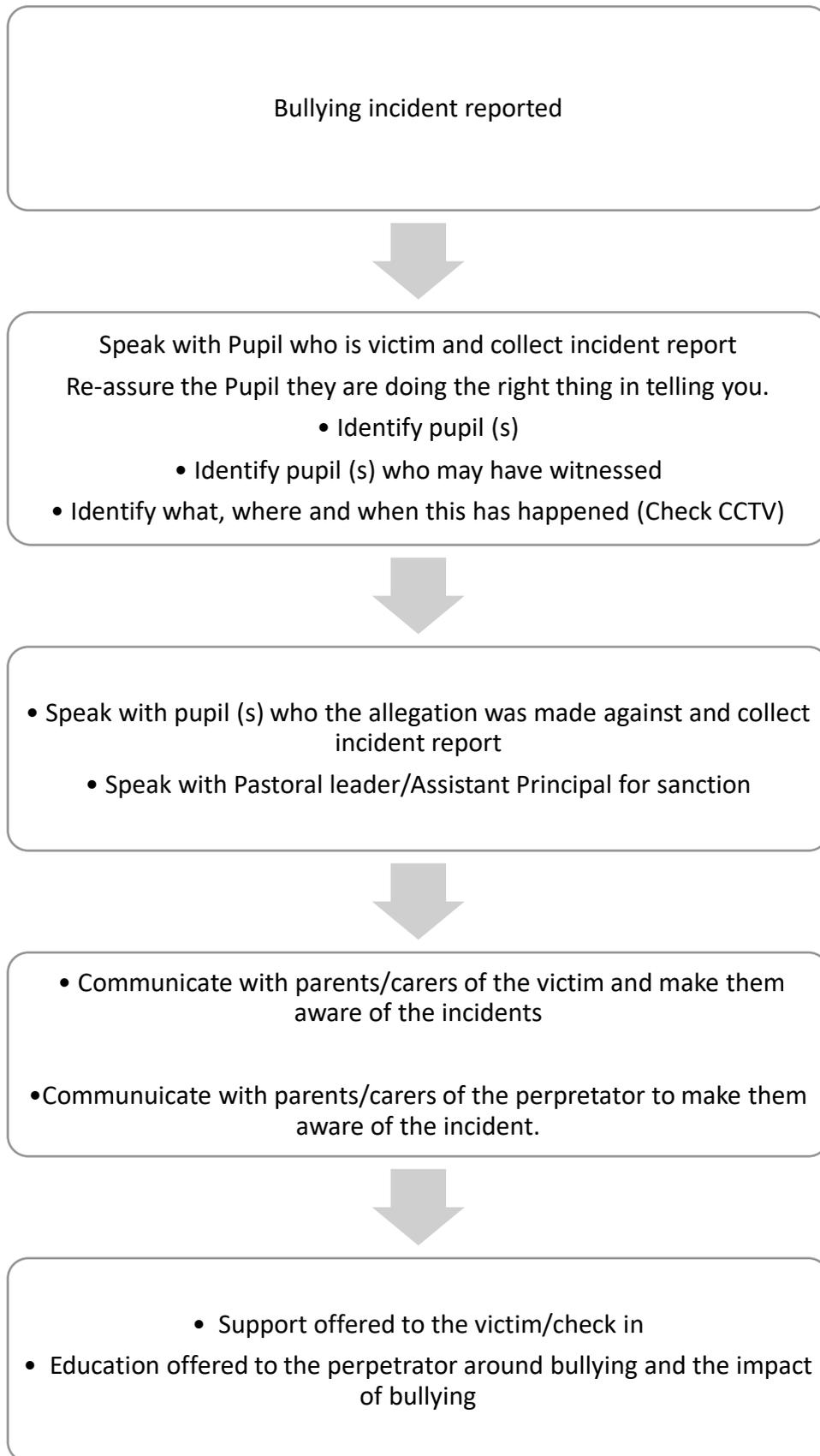
Cases of bullying or suspected bullying will be carefully and thoroughly investigated. All those involved will be given a fair opportunity to talk about the matter with an appropriate person.

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
- Peer mentoring by a member of the anti-bullying ambassador team

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



## 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.

- **The Diana Award**

An anti-bullying ambassadors' programme to empower young people to take responsibility for changing the attitudes and behaviour of their peers towards bullying, by identifying, training and supporting school anti-bullying ambassadors.

- **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.

- **The Bullying Intervention Group (BIG):**

BIG offers a national scheme and award (The BIG Award) for schools which recognises that they tackle bullying effectively.

- **Restorative Justice Council:**

Includes best practice guidance for practitioners 2011.

## Useful Links and Supporting Organisations

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

## Special Educational Need and Disability

- Changing Faces: [www.changingfaces.org.uk](http://www.changingfaces.org.uk)
- Mencap: [www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk)
- DfE: SEND code of practice

## Cyberbullying

- Childnet [www.childnet.com](http://www.childnet.com)
- Internet Watch Foundation [www.iwf.org.uk](http://www.iwf.org.uk)
- Think U Know [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)
- UK Safer Internet Centre [www.saferinternet.org.uk](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk)
- The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS)  
[www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-council-for-child-internet-safety-ukccis](http://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](http://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](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying)

## Race, Religion and Nationality

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

## LGBT

- Barnardos LGBT Hub: [www.barnardos.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/our\\_work/lgbtq.htm](http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/our_work/lgbtq.htm)
- Metro Charity: [www.metrocentreonline.org](http://www.metrocentreonline.org)
- EACH: [www.eachaction.org.uk](http://www.eachaction.org.uk)
- Proud Trust: [www.theproudtrust.org](http://www.theproudtrust.org)
- Schools Out: [www.schools-out.org.uk](http://www.schools-out.org.uk)
- Stonewall: [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)

## Sexual Harassment and Sexual Bullying

- Ending Violence against Women and Girls (EVAW)  
[www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk](http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk)
- A Guide for Schools:  
[www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/data/files/resources/71/EVAWCoalition-Schools-Guide.pdf](http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/data/files/resources/71/EVAWCoalition-Schools-Guide.pdf)
- Disrespect No Body: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/disrespect-nobodycampaign-posters](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disrespect-nobodycampaign-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](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying)

### **Sources and guidance referenced in this policy**

This policy was updated with regard to the DfE guidelines:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges (September 2023)
- 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)