Anti-Bullying Policy

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1. Introduction

This policy has been developed with reference to the Department for Education guidance Preventing and Tackling Bullying, the Equality Act 2010, and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE 2026).

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE 2026)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a9081309a177a1decf97b00/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2026.pdf

Phoenix Bay School believes that every young person has the right to live each day in school without fear, bullying, threats, name-calling, racial or sexual harassment, interference with property and any other action designed to frighten, humiliate, or embarrass are totally unacceptable. Bullying takes place to some extent in every school; it is unfortunately a part of our culture and can be seen in families, friendships and in the workplace. To acknowledge this is not to accept it. It is a way of affirming our responsibility to work together as a community to create an environment in which everyone feels accepted, valued and able to get on with the job of learning and growing.

For this reason, we strive:

- To ensure that all members of the school community follow the agreed Code of Conduct.
- To ensure that there is good order and that the school is well organised.
- To ensure that adults who are responsible for supervising young people carry out their duties effectively.
- To ensure that all members of our community treat one another with respect and value our Equality and Diversity Policy.
- To promote learning about citizenship, rights and responsibility so that it is clear that bullying is a form of anti-social behaviour which cannot and will not be tolerated.
- To develop an effective school.
- To develop an effective School Council cycle so that young people are able to address issues affecting their welfare.

Bullying causes pain. At the very least it causes distress and at worst it ruins lives. Its legacy lives on into adult life. Young people and staff must never ignore or accept bullying in any form. The credibility of this policy depends upon everyone in our school speaking out and then taking agreed action whenever bullying arises.

2. Code of Conduct

All staff at Phoenix Bay School are committed to empower, motivate, and inspire all our students to overcome barriers to learning and reach their true potential. The aim of our broad, balanced innovative curriculum is to ensure students leave out school with tolerance and respect for others, emotional resilience, good social skills, and the best outcomes possible.

- Maintain positive and healthy relationships
- Become emotionally resilient
- Be kind
- Become tolerant and respectful of individuals
- Achieve the best possible outcomes

3. Equality and Diversity Statement

At Phoenix Bay School we are committed to providing services and an environment for learning and developing which reflect the breadth and diversity of society. Throughout our work and relationships with the Local Authorities, parents/carers, and young people and between staff, we always aim to ensure there is no discrimination relating to age, sex, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief, gender reassignment or disability. All children and young people have a right to a broad and balanced range of experiences, both in terms of the school curriculum and the enhancement activities that reflect in a positive way the range of cultures and experiences of the whole community.

4. Safeguarding children and young people

Phoenix Bay School is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people. It recognises its responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect and prevent children from harm, abuse and exploitation.

Bullying can form part of child-on-child abuse and can happen inside and outside of school and online. Child-on-child abuse may include bullying, cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, sexual violence, harmful sexual behaviour, misogynistic behaviour and other forms of intimidation or abuse.

When there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, a bullying incident will be addressed as a safeguarding concern. Please refer to Phoenix Bay School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Child-on-Child Abuse Policy for more information.

All staff have a responsibility to recognise concerns and report them to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) without delay.

However, external support can be given to students whether or not the matter is deemed to be a child protection concern. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, the school may draw on a range of external services to support students who are experiencing bullying, or to tackle

any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying or bullying-type behaviours.

5. What is Bullying

Bullying may be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. Bullying can be aimed at certain individuals or groups, for example because of race, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation. Bullying can take place in person, outside of school or online, and can form part of child-on-child abuse.

All staff at Phoenix Bay School are aware that children can abuse other children, often referred to as child-on-child abuse, and that this can happen inside and outside of school and online. Staff are aware of the school's Child-on-Child Abuse Policy and the important role they have to play in preventing abuse and responding where they believe a child may be at risk.

Bullying can take many forms and may include:

- **Physical** – for example, hitting, kicking, pushing or theft.
- **Verbal** – for example, racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name-calling or other offensive language.
- **Emotional** – for example, deliberately isolating an individual from activities or the social acceptance of their peer group.
- **Racist** – for example, racial taunts, graffiti or gestures.
- **Sexual harassment** – unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, which may include sexual comments, jokes, gestures, messages, images or unwanted physical contact.
- **Cyberbullying** – bullying carried out through email, text messages, social media, online gaming, websites or other digital platforms.
- **Prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying** – bullying motivated by prejudice towards an individual or group.
- **Bullying related to special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)**.
- **Bullying related to appearance or health conditions**.
- **Bullying of young carers, looked-after children or children experiencing particular family or home circumstances.**

Low-level disruption and the use of offensive or inappropriate language can have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as "just banter" or "horseplay", it can also lead to a reluctance to report other behaviour. School staff will intervene early to set clear expectations about behaviour that is and is not acceptable and help to prevent negative behaviours from escalating.

Prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying

Prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying occurs when bullying is motivated by prejudice against an individual or group. This may include bullying relating to race, religion or belief, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, ethnicity, appearance, health conditions or family circumstances.

This may include children who are LGBTQ+, children who are thought to be LGBTQ+, children who are perceived to be different in some way, or children who have family members or friends with a particular characteristic.

Staff will challenge inappropriate language and behaviour and will take reports of prejudice-based or discriminatory bullying seriously.

Sexist or sexual bullying

Sexist and sexual bullying can affect any child. Boys may be victims as well as girls, and both sexes may be victims of their own sex. Sexual bullying may be characterised by name calling, comments or unwanted attention about appearance, attractiveness and emerging puberty. It may also include unwanted touching, innuendo, propositions, sharing of sexual or pornographic imagery, graffiti or other unwanted sexual behaviour.

Students may also be targeted because of their sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or because they are perceived to be different from their peers.

Misogynistic attitudes, language or behaviour will not be dismissed as "banter" or normalised. Staff will challenge misogynistic behaviour and language and will consider whether it forms part of a wider safeguarding concern, including harassment or abuse.

Racist bullying

The school uses the working definitions of *racism* and *racist incident* that were proposed in the report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, 1999. The report defined racism as:

“Conduct or words or practices which disadvantage or advantage people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin”.

Historically, the term *racism* has been used principally in situations where colour and physical appearance are considered to be significant markers of difference. There has virtually always, however, been a cultural element as well – "the other" has been recognised not only by their physical appearance but also in relation to their culture, language and religion.

Other forms of racism where differences of culture and religion are significant include Islamophobia and hostility towards refugees and people seeking asylum.

Child-on-child abuse and bullying

All staff undertake training to understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children that are abusive in nature. Staff understand that downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys", can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children.

Staff have the confidence and knowledge to challenge, respond, support and report incidents of bullying and child-on-child abuse within the culture of Phoenix Bay School.

Staff understand that even if there are no reports, it does not mean that abuse is not happening. When staff have concerns regarding child-on-child abuse, they must speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) and follow the procedures set out in the school's Child-on-Child Abuse Policy and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Bullying may form part of wider child-on-child abuse, including harassment and violence. This may include physical or sexual violence, sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour, discriminatory or prejudiced behaviour, misogynistic behaviour, online abuse and other forms of intimidation or abuse. All concerns will be taken seriously and responded to in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

6. Bullying which occurs outside school premises

Staff members have the power to discipline students for misbehaving outside the school premises. Section 90 and 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 say that a school's disciplinary powers can be used to address students' conduct when they are not on school premises and not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff, but only if it would be reasonable for the school to regulate students' behaviour in those circumstances. Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and acted on in the same way as bullying in school. The Principal will also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police, or their local authority of the action taken against a student.

7. Our Approach

School staff, Principal and Directors are best placed to decide how best to respond to the issues that affect the students at Phoenix Bay School. There is no single solution to bullying which will suit all schools, however we will:

- Establish and maintain a caring ethos so that bullying is less likely to occur
- Encourage discussion about bullying so that it does not become a hidden activity
- Listen to students when they talk about or report bullying
- Provide good adult role models, i.e., never misusing authority as power to humiliate or dominate

Where bullying is identified as, or gives rise to, a safeguarding concern, the matter will be referred to the DSL or DDSL and managed in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The school will consider the needs and circumstances of all children involved, including the child experiencing bullying and the child displaying the behaviour. Support, intervention and appropriate consequences will be considered on an individual basis.

8. Prevention

Successful schools create an environment that prevents bullying from being a serious problem in the first place. Our best prospect of reducing or even eliminating bullying is through constantly expecting all members of the school to treat each other with respect and understanding in line with our Code of Conduct. As staff, we can do this best by example rather than preaching.

The role of staff in preventing bullying is important in three ways:

1. Staff behaviour sets the tone of the organisation's day-to-day life. Bullying is more likely to occur where staff adopt authoritarian or dominating styles. This gives young people the message that staff authority comes from her or his power rather than from legitimacy

2. Young people's self-esteem should be supported. A strong sense of self-worth helps build strong relationships, which in turn both reduce the likelihood of bullying and, if it does occur, reduces its harmful impact

3. Spotting signs that a young person might be the victim of bullying is important. There are many indicators of possible bullying – loss of, or damage to, possessions, physical injury, change in disposition, isolation from usual friends, tearfulness, deterioration of work and others. Verbal bullying should never be ignored.

4.

Further prevention strategies employed by the organisation are as follows:

- Our code of conduct is published and regularly discussed.

- We ensure young people's consultation and participation is formalised through student voice.

- Discussions take place informally and during keyworker time on the nature of bullying and incidents.

- We highlight and value examples of kind behaviour, both in school and in the wider world. (e.g. in the media, news, entertainment).

- We create an ethos of good behaviour where students treat one another and the school staff with respect, this is done through reward culture based on our school values which includes respect.

- Increased supervision takes place in parts of the school where bullying may be more likely implement disciplinary sanctions.

- The consequences of bullying reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see that bullying is unacceptable.

- We openly discuss differences between people that motivate bullying, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality, gender reassignment or appearance related differences. Also, children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities.

- We provide effective staff training on Anti-bullying laws, procedures, and prevention.

- We make it easy for students to report bullying so that they are assured that they will be listened to, and incidents acted on. This is done through good relationships through staff and students, parents/carer ringing into the school.

9. Dealing with Incidents

The nature and level of support will depend on the individual circumstances and the level of need. School staff will decide which intervention would be best for each student. Where prevention has failed, and bullying has taken place we will deal with it carefully. We will not give way to anger however we may feel about what has happened and its effect on the victim.

Our two aims are:

- To protect the victim's self-esteem and self-confidence and to keep her or him safe.

- To modify the attitude and behaviour of the perpetrator(s)

Any incident which raises a safeguarding concern will be reported to the DSL or DDSL without delay and managed in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Where bullying involves child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment, sexual violence, harmful sexual behaviour, discriminatory behaviour or significant online harm, the appropriate safeguarding procedures will be followed

10. Procedures

Every case is different. Professional judgement and experience help staff react in the best way. This means the actions below might be amended in the interests of individual students, but in essence what follows are our standard actions in response to bullying.
We:

- Talk with the victim (Solution focused approach). The victim must be given time and encouragement to talk, not just about details of what happened, but also about their feelings. The victim should feel supported, and an agreement made about meeting again. The discussion will be logged using CPOMS and will be highlighted as a bullying issue. All bullying issues will be forwarded and followed up by the Principal. Where appropriate, the DSL will consider whether the incident indicates a wider safeguarding concern or pattern of behaviour requiring further action or referral.
  Where an incident is identified as a safeguarding concern, staff must report this to the DSL or DDSL without delay and the school's safeguarding procedures will be followed.

- Talk with the perpetrator (solution focused approach). Although details will be needed, it is important not to get bogged down in detail when it is feelings which are at the heart of the issue. The student needs to be encouraged to consider and understand how the victim feels. It might be appropriate to talk about her or his personal relationships with others in general. In any case the perpetrator will be required to come to an agreement about how to behave in the future towards the victim and others. This will be logged as a follow up on the same original incident logged on CPOMS, thus creating a trail of evidence and notes.

- Anti-bullying intervention programmed. 1:1 session that will be specific to the individual such as building empathy, self-esteem etc.

- Consider setting up a victim/bully meeting (Restorative justice). This is only useful in some cases. It can help the victim recover from the incident and give the bully a better insight into the hurt he or she has caused. It can also help create a new relationship. However, it is wrong to have a meeting if the victim is not ready. Pressure should not be put on the victim if they are nervous or worried about meeting the bully face to face. Inform parents/carers and record comments on a further follow up on CPOMS

- Follow-up meetings with both the victim and the bully will be arranged to confirm that the problem has been solved. Where it has not, further work will be done. These follow up meetings will again be logged on CPOMS.

- Involve other agencies where on-going support is needed either by the bully or the victim or when continued work is called for (e.g. students social worker)

- Ensure documentation is thorough. In all cases, a bullying incident is recorded and leadership are to be informed. It should make clear who the perpetrator is. This will then be actioned. A log is maintained of all reported bullying and an annual bullying survey is conducted so a whole school evaluation is possible.

11. Consequences

As our aims are the resolution of the situation, support for the victim and the prevention of recurrence, the option of punishment must be carefully weighed. Bullying is a hurtful anti-social behaviour undertaken by those who get excitement, status, or material gain from it. In that sense it is done by those who have a sense of inadequacy, even if only temporarily. They probably have no socially acceptable way of gaining those things. Punishing a bully is likely to increase their alienation and anxiety and many not help them adopt more acceptable forms of behaviour. The perpetrator needs the opportunity to acknowledge what they have done, to understand the distress caused and to feel that their ability to change has been recognised.

Where the bully is genuinely remorseful and shows signs of having gained in-sight an apology to the victim, together with a promise about future behaviour, will suffice.

We may apply a disciplinary measure to some students' who bully to show clearly that their behaviour is wrong. Where a sanction is thought necessary and effective it will be set; the schools' Behaviour and Relationship Policy clearly sets out the sanctions available.

12.Cyber-Bullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur inside and outside school. Cyber-bullying can take place through social media, messaging services, email, online gaming, websites and other digital platforms.

Cyber-bullying may include sending abusive or threatening messages, sharing harmful or humiliating content, excluding someone from online groups, creating or sharing inappropriate images or videos, spreading rumours or impersonating another person online.

Online bullying may also involve self-generated intimate images or videos, or AI-generated or manipulated images or videos, including deepfakes. Any concern involving sexual images or videos of a child will be treated as a safeguarding concern and reported to the DSL or DDSL without delay.

Where an electronic device is seized in accordance with the school's Behaviour and Relationship Policy and relevant legal requirements, staff will follow the school's procedures for searching, screening and confiscation. Where there are concerns that material may be evidence of an offence, the matter will be dealt with in accordance with safeguarding and police procedures.

Where there is no safeguarding or criminal concern, cyber-bullying will be dealt with using the strategies set out above and the school's Behaviour and Relationship Policy.

13.Help and support will be given as is appropriate to both the victim and the bully

13.1 **What can you do if you are Being Bullied?**

- Remember that your silence is the bully's greatest weapon.
- Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied and that it is wrong
- Be proud of who you are
- Be assertive. Say "No", walk confidently away. Fighting back will make things worse.
- Tell an adult you trust straight away. You will get immediate support.
- If you need to you can talk to a member of student voice who will help you to understand the problem and bring it to an appropriate adult.
- Keep any digital images or comments posted via social media or email saved on your computer as evidence.
- All staff will take you seriously and aim to deal with bullies in a way which will address the bullying and not make things worse for you

13.2 **If you know someone being bullied?**

- Take action.
- Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feel more unhappy and on their own.
- Encourage the victim to tell an appropriate adult.
- If you feel you cannot get involved, tell an adult IMMEDIATELY.
- Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully.

13.3 Help and Support will be given as is appropriate to all children involved
We support the child experiencing bullying:

- By offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about the experience and trusted adult.
- By informing their parents/carers.

- By offering continuing support when they feel they need it.
- By taking appropriate steps to prevent further bullying.

We offer support and challenge to the child displaying bullying behaviour in the following ways:

- By talking about what happened t discover why they became involved.
- By informing the bullies' parents/carers.
- By continuing to work with the bullies to change their behaviour patterns and to challenge prejudiced attitudes as far as possible
- By using restorative justice techniques to resolve the conflict where possible.

14.Performance Standards

- All staff and students will understand what bullying is.
- possible.
- All staff and students will know what the bullying policy states and should follow procedures when incidents are reported.
- All allegations of bullying will be taken seriously and investigated and monitored.
- If bullying does occur, all students should be able to TELL and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.
- Staff will receive appropriate training to ensure this policy is adhered to.

15. Bullying by Staff

If a member of staff commits deliberately hurtful or harmful behaviour towards a student, this will be treated seriously and may constitute a safeguarding concern.

Any concern or allegation that a member of staff has behaved inappropriately towards a student will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the appropriate senior member of staff and managed in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and procedures for allegations against staff.

Where appropriate, the matter will be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and investigated using the relevant safeguarding procedures.

All staff are encouraged to report any concerns related to another staff member to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If the concern is related to the Principal, staff should report concerns to the Chair of the Advisory Board.

Phoenix Bay School has a separate Whistleblowing Policy outlining this information and procedures in more detail.

16. E-Safety

Whilst regulation and technical solutions are very important, their use must be balanced by educating students to take a responsible approach. The education of students in online safety is therefore an essential part of Phoenix Bay School's online safety provision. Children and young people need the help and support of the school to recognise and avoid online safety risks and build their resilience.

Online safety is a focus in all areas of the curriculum and staff reinforce online safety messages across the curriculum. Students are taught to be critically aware of the materials and content they access online and are guided to validate the accuracy of information, acknowledge the source of information used and respect copyright when using material accessed on the internet.

As a school, we actively promote high levels of digital literacy. Digital literacy includes knowledge and understanding of the applications and implications of digital technologies, in contrast to the skills focus of computer literacy. Digital literacy is considered a key aspect of contemporary citizenship, enabling individuals to participate safely and responsibly in the digital world.

At Phoenix Bay School there is a Smoothwall digital filtering and monitoring system to support the online safety of students, staff, volunteers, Directors and the Advisory Board.