



Anti-Bullying Policy

2026-27



watertonacademytrust.org

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Scope and Publication

This anti-bullying policy applies to all pupils educated in Waterton Academy Trust schools or settings, irrespective of the age of the pupil, or whether or not a pupil is in the care of the school when bullying occurs, including bullying incidents online or occurring off the school premises.

This policy is available on each school website, and is provided to all parents and to all staff. This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible formats if required.

This policy has been drafted in line with the Department for Education (DfE) updated guidance Preventing and tackling bullying (July 2017):
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1069688/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf

Statement of Intent

Waterton Academy Trust is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils, so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere, and we expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We are aware that pupils may be bullied in any school or setting, and recognise that preventing, raising awareness and consistently responding to any cases of bullying should be a priority to ensure the safety and well-being of our pupils.

Bullying behaviour is always unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell someone and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to inform the staff.

This policy is closely linked with our Behaviour Policy and our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Objectives of this Policy

We are determined to promote and develop a school ethos where bullying behaviour is regarded as unacceptable, to ensure a safe and secure environment is sustained for all pupils.

We aim for all pupils to reach their potential academically, socially and personally through learning and playing in a safe and secure environment.

Therefore:

- all governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents/carers should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- all governors, teaching and non-teaching staff should be aware of and familiar with this anti-bullying policy, and be confident in following the policy when required.
- all pupils and parents/carers should be aware of and familiar with this anti-bullying policy, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- all pupils and parents/carers should feel assured and confident that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- all pupils and parents/carers, and school staff, know that bullying will not be tolerated in any Waterton school or setting.

What Is Bullying?

In all our schools we discuss what bullying is, as well as incidents we would not describe as bullying, with all pupils through assemblies and PSHE lessons. We agree that:

- Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally;
- Bullying could be prejudice-based or discriminatory;
Bullying results in pain and/or distress to the child experiencing bullying.

Some forms of bullying may also constitute child-on-child abuse and may require safeguarding intervention in line with the Trust Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Bullying may also involve a pattern of harmful, intimidating, excluding or humiliating behaviour carried out by different individuals towards the same child over time. In assessing whether bullying has occurred, the school will consider the cumulative effect and impact of behaviours, not solely whether each individual incident appears serious in isolation.

Bullying can be:

Emotional Bullying	Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting E.g. hiding belongings, threatening gestures, making unpleasant remarks
Verbal Bullying	Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
Physical Bullying	Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence, including damaging someone's clothes or belongings
Racist Bullying	This refers to a range of hurtful behaviours, both physical and psychological, that make the person feel unwelcome marginalised and excluded, powerless or worthless because of their colour, ethnicity culture, faith community, national origin or national status.
Sexual / Sexist Bullying	Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments including talking to someone in a sexually inappropriate way, or related to a person's gender or gender reassignment
Homophobic, Biphobic or Transphobic Bullying	This occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender or trans people, or bullying that focuses on issues of sexuality and gender.
Cyber Bullying	The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual bullying', which can occur in and outside school. Cyberbullying is bullying behaviour carried out through electronic or online means, which can happen beyond the school day into home and private space, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content.

Bullying may also be:

- related to someone's disability, special educational needs, learning difficulties, intellectual ability, health or appearance
- related to pregnancy or maternity
- related to someone's home circumstances

Bullying can constitute a safeguarding concern, particularly where there is reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. In such cases, the school will follow the procedures outlined in the Trust

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and work with children's social care and/or the police as appropriate.

Bullying related to a protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation) may amount to unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation under the Equality Act 2010 and will always be treated seriously.

Child-on-child abuse can include sexual harassment, upskirting, online image-based abuse, hazing or initiation, and other harmful sexual behaviours. These behaviours are forms of bullying and safeguarding concerns under KCSIE 2025. They will be dealt with seriously and in line with the Trust Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Cyber bullying

Staff will respond to cyberbullying with the same level of seriousness as in-person incidents. The school will also apply the principles set out in the Trust Online Safety Policy, ensuring children know how to report concerns and that incidents are logged, investigated, and addressed in line with safeguarding procedures. The Trust applies the DfE Filtering and Monitoring Standards (2023) and Mobile Phones in Schools guidance (2024) to reduce risks of online harm. Incidents of cyberbullying are recorded in CPOMS, monitored for patterns, and escalated when threats occur outside school but impact pupils in school. Online safety teaching, in line with the Computing curriculum and PSHE, equips pupils to report and manage online risks.

Preventing bullying

Our schools are committed to promoting positive values of mutual respect and concern and to taking action to prevent bullying in a wide range of contexts.

Staff Vigilance

Members of staff are vigilant at all times but particularly before and after lessons and at playtimes. Staff are expected to promote an anti-bullying culture and prevent bullying in various ways including:

- anticipating problems and providing support
- celebrating achievement and positive attitudes
- disciplining fairly, consistently and reasonably, taking into account any disability or special educational need of the pupil and the needs of vulnerable pupils
- making opportunities to listen to pupils
- acting as advocates of pupils
- discussing behaviour and concerns in meetings

Staff Training

The school ensures that all members of staff receive appropriate training on preventing and tackling bullying behaviour, especially awareness of the risk and indications of bullying and child abuse, and how to deal with cases. The school also arranges training in counselling skills, including bereavement where appropriate.

Anti-Bullying Education

The School ensures that a variety of measures are taken throughout the year to educate pupils about bullying and this policy. Pupils are taught that bullying will not be tolerated at the school and how to promote positive attitudes as well as how to share problems and raise concerns.

Measures include:

- annual anti-bullying awareness week
- anti-bullying posters placed around the school
- Personal, Social and Health education (PSHE)
- anti-bullying messages in assemblies

Schools will gather pupil views regularly through surveys, school councils, and focus groups to monitor the effectiveness of anti-bullying work. Where appropriate, restorative practice will be used to resolve conflict, rebuild relationships, and strengthen community cohesion.

Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

A child may indicate evidence of bullying through signs or behaviour. Adults should be aware of these signs and should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide, or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to perform poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home hungry (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous & jumpy when a cyber-message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to experience bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. We have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

In addition, in line with the Equality Act 2010, it is essential that our schools:

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

Procedure for Dealing with a Reported Incident of Bullying

Pupils

A pupil who is being bullied, or who is worried about another pupil being bullied should inform a suitable person straight away and can do so in several ways. He/she can tell his/her class teacher, teaching assistant, other member of staff, his/her parents or responsible older pupil. Children with SEN or disabilities can often lack the social or communication skills to report such incidents, so our staff will be alert to the potential bullying these pupils face and will help our mechanisms for reporting to be accessible to all.

Parents

Parents are asked to let the school know directly if they have any cause for concern, either on behalf of their own children or because of rumours about others.

Staff

Any member of staff who becomes aware of any bullying behaviour should inform the Headteacher without delay, in accordance with the procedures set out below.

This policy focuses on the bullying of pupils by pupils although it is recognised that a staff member could be on the receiving end of bullying behaviours and on occasion may be perceived to be guilty of bullying. Staff members who are concerned about bullying or harassment at work should refer to the Dignity at Work Policy.

Procedures

In the event of an instance of bullying being observed or reported, the member of school staff must:

- Respond quickly and sensitively and ascertain the facts from the child experiencing bullying whilst offering support, reassurance and advice.
- Report the allegation to the headteacher without delay. All incidences of bullying must be treated as serious and the above steps followed, however minor.
- Record all serious allegations and subsequent action on CPOMs
- Senior leaders will monitor records regularly to identify patterns, repeat incidents, or safeguarding concerns. The Trust will review data across all schools to evaluate impact and ensure accountability.

Assessment and Investigation

The headteacher will nominate an appropriate teacher or leader to see the child experiencing bullying, the pupil(s) accused of bullying behaviour and any witnesses without delay. This will depend on what has been reported (See appendix 3) The investigation will consider:

- the nature of the incident
- whether the incident is targeted and/or forms part of a wider pattern of behaviour
- whether the incident involves any other individuals or a group of pupils
- whether physical injury has been caused
- who needs to be informed (including the parents, designated member of staff for child protection, the headteacher, social services, the police, the trust)
- whether there have been any misunderstandings
- whether the complaint is justified in whole or in part
- whether any further action needs to be taken, and if so, what action is appropriate.

Support will be offered to pupils who have been bullied, including pastoral care, mentoring, and access to external support services if required. Pupils who engage in bullying will also receive targeted interventions to address underlying behaviours. The wider pupil community may be involved in restorative approaches or education sessions to rebuild positive relationships.

The school recognises that children involved in bullying incidents may have differing and changing roles over time. A child who displays bullying behaviour may also be vulnerable or may previously have experienced bullying themselves. This will not excuse harmful behaviour, but will be considered when assessing support needs, safeguarding concerns, and appropriate interventions.

Parents and carers will be informed promptly of confirmed bullying incidents involving their child and will be engaged in the process of supporting both the child experiencing bullying and, where appropriate, the perpetrator.

Resolving the Incident After an Investigation

Once investigated, and if an allegation is upheld, the school will make every effort to resolve the problem and prevent any further occurrences. The range of responses will include one or more of the following:

- Advice and support for the child experiencing bullying and, where appropriate, establishing a course of action to help the child experiencing bullying including support from the school counsellor or external sources.
- Advice and support for the perpetrator in trying to change his/her behaviour. This may include clear instructions and a warning or final warning.
- Consideration of the background behind the bullying behaviour and whether external services should be used to help the school to tackle any underlying issues.
- A supervised meeting between the child displaying bullying behaviour and the child experiencing bullying to discuss their differences and ways in which they can avoid any future conflict.
- A disciplinary sanction against the child displaying bullying behaviour, in accordance with the school's behaviour policy. In very serious or persistent cases, suspension or permanent exclusion may be considered in accordance with statutory guidance, the school's behaviour policy, equality duties, and the individual circumstances of the pupil.

- Targeted action to disrupt and prevent group bullying behaviour, including changes to supervision, pupil groupings, social arrangements, and access to identified locations where appropriate. Moving either the child experiencing bullying or the child displaying bullying behaviour to a different class after consultation with the pupil, his/her parents and the relevant staff.
- Involving external agencies including social services or the police.
- Notifying the parents of one or both of the pupils about the case and the action which has been taken.
- Taking anti-bullying measures within the school community, for example an assembly on bullying.
- Noting the action taken and the outcome in CPOMS.
- Implementing transparent monitoring and review arrangements, including follow up discussions with pupils and parents where appropriate, to ensure the bullying behaviour has ceased and that all pupils involved feel safe and supported.
- Noting the action taken and the outcome in the personalised strategy.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Role of the Child

- To tell someone about bullying
- To seek support from trusted adults, report concerns promptly, and participate in supportive or restorative processes where appropriate and safe to do so.
- To tell the truth,
- In the case of the child displaying bullying behaviour, to seek forgiveness

The Role of Parents/Carers

We want parents/carers to be reassured that we take bullying very seriously indeed. We expect parents/carers to listen sensitively and patiently to their child and respond appropriately. We invite parents/carers to bear in mind the following points:

- We will always act with the best of intentions
- We will listen to your child
- We will listen to the viewpoint of the alleged perpetrator
- We will listen to the comments and observations of other children involved
- We will be sympathetic
- We will not automatically apportion blame and will try to arrive at a fair decision
- Every child will, on occasions, lie, or be selective with the truth. This is something every parent/carer has to face at some point. Whilst it is noble to believe otherwise, years of experience suggests different
- Children sometimes will claim an incident took place as a method of seeking revenge
- Sometimes victims remember incidents in different ways
- The school will consider the full context of any incident, including relationship dynamics, communication, and any preceding events, while maintaining a clear focus on the safety and wellbeing of all pupils involved.
- School leaders will seek to make fair, evidence-informed decisions following a proportionate investigation.

- Honesty, truthfulness and accepting responsibility are greatly valued

Bullying or harassment of staff or parents by other parents/carers will be addressed under the Trust's Abusive and Threatening Behaviour Policy.

The Role of the Headteacher

The headteacher must ensure that:

- a detailed record is kept in relation to all complaints and investigations of bullying, and uploaded to CPOMs
- parents are informed if and when it may be dealing with a significant bullying situation relating to their child
- the class teacher other staff (as appropriate) have an agreed strategy in response to any investigation of bullying, which is recorded in writing, acted on and subsequently updated in writing.
- there is regular monitoring, for as long as necessary thereafter, and that any personalised strategy is reviewed.
- they monitor CPOMs in order to identify patterns, both in relation to individual pupils and across the school as a whole
- together with the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead, report bullying incidents to the (a) Local authority's children's social care team (and if appropriate the police) if it is thought the incident constitutes a child protection concern – this would be where there's "reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm" and/or (b) Police if the incident could be a criminal offence or pose a serious threat to a member of the public (this applies whether it occurred on or off the school premises).
- Ensure that staff receive regular training on recognising, responding to, and recording bullying incidents, including online bullying and prejudiced-based bullying.

The role of Staff

Staff are expected to model respectful behaviour at all times, in line with the DfE Behaviour in Schools (2024) guidance. Allegations of bullying or harassment between staff will be managed through the Trust's Dignity at Work Policy and People Strategy.

Complaints

All complaints regarding the implementation of this policy must be submitted and will be dealt with according to the School Complaints Policy.

The Role of Trustees/Governors

The trustees and governors have a responsibility to oversee that the policy and procedures are being carried out appropriately and effectively. Governors may receive anonymised reporting and monitoring information regarding bullying incidents in order to fulfil their oversight responsibilities. Governors will receive a report from the headteacher on the implementation of the policy and records of bullying behaviour in every governors meeting.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Trust Board in line with DfE guidance.

Appendix 1: External Support

- National Bullying Helpline www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk
- Kidscape Parents Helpline (Mon-Fri, 10-4) 0845 1 205 204
- Family Life 0808 800 2222
- Young Minds www.youngminds.org.uk
- Kidscape website www.kidscape.org.uk

Each academy publishes a SEN information report on its website, which sets out how this policy is implemented in the school.

The information report will be updated annually and as soon as possible after any changes to the information it contains.

Appendix 2: Related Government Statutory and Non-Statutory Guidance

- Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies (DfE, July 2017)
- Teaching Online Safety in School (DfE, June 2019)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, September 2025)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, July 2023)
- The Education and Inspections Act (2006), Section 89
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- The Equality Act 2010
- Behaviour in Schools: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff (DfE, February 2024)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, September 2025)

Appendix 3: Types of Bullying and Typical Response

Not all incidents of conflict, unkindness, teasing or disagreement constitute bullying. Bullying is usually characterised by repeated behaviour and an imbalance of power. However, some one-off incidents may still require serious sanctions or safeguarding intervention, particularly where they involve prejudice, sexual harassment, violence, threats, humiliation, or online abuse.

It is not possible to define a clear response for every situation; however, the chart below suggests a typical response. Although the term 'teacher' is used below, in more serious cases this is likely to mean Headteacher or other senior members of staff. This list is not exhaustive.

	Type of Behaviour	Response
Category A Teacher to be Informed (& keep notes on CPOMs)	Mild teasing	This may occur where a pupil is learning what is appropriate/ acceptable and what is not and could be developmental. It could fall into the description of being irritating or foolish behaviour but not necessarily distressing. In this instance, we would advise the perpetrator that mild teasing can become hurtful, annoying or distressing. We would also advise the child experiencing bullying to ignore as much as possible and report any teasing leading to hurt.

Category B To be Dealt with by Class Teacher (& keep notes on CPOMs)	Moderate teasing, name calling, pulling faces etc.	Teacher to listen to both parties. Staff will consider the accounts of all pupils involved, available evidence, and any witness information. Explanation of the upset caused. Mild rebuke if first instance. Records will be kept and noted on CPOMs.
Category C To be Dealt with by Phase Leaders (& keep notes on CPOMs)	Teasing or physical attack leading to pain / tears. This would include punching, kicking, hair pulling or in a more subtle way.	Phase Leader to listen to both parties. Relies on the honesty of alleged perpetrator and accounts from others. Explanation of the upset caused.. The aggressor will be advised of the effect their actions are having and the inappropriateness in a school setting. Warning that this is serious A loss of play or other privileges are likely to result and parents may be informed. The ultimate aim is that both leave the incident fully resolved and without any bad feelings or further recriminations. Some form of punishment required such as loss of playtime but not PE lesson, art lesson etc. Victim must feel secure, and that justice has been done. In particular that they must immediately report any further incident.
Category D To be Dealt with by Head / Deputy (& keep notes on CPOMs)	As above but 'persistent' and 'repeated' are key aspects in this category.	As above but parents will be informed. Depending on severity, the Chair of the Governors may be informed. A TA/HLTA will run an intervention group e.g. "Solution Focused Therapy"
Category E To be Dealt with by Head / Deputy (& keep notes on CPOMs)	Serious attack with the intent of intimidating the child experiencing bullying or causing the victim harm to gain power, influence or control over them. This can be achieved in more subtle ways by persistent lower level bullying by repeated name calling, insults etc. leaving the child experiencing bullying 'worn down'.	Teacher must respond immediately to ensure that the child experiencing bullying is protected from the alleged perpetrator. A case such as this would normally be referred to the Head or Deputy Head. It is important to find others who can support any case. Remember, witnesses too may feel threatened - reassure them. The parents of all children involved will be informed promptly. The teacher must be careful to avoid any accusations until the matter is proved. It is not uncommon for the child experiencing bullying and her/his parents to assume that their child is entirely innocent, and that the aggressor is entirely guilty. It is not uncommon for parents of the alleged bully to either deny the evidence or suggest overreaction. Where the child experiencing bullying is entirely innocent and various incidents have been proved, bullying is largely proved. The Chair of Governors will be informed if appropriate. At Waterton Academy Trust it is exceptionally rare for any child to experience bullying at Category E level. However, if the problem were to persist, despite repeated academy/parent intervention, then a temporary suspension or permanent exclusion might be necessary. This is why it is important to ensure that evidence is irrefutable, and a record of any serious incident retained. Securing a suspension or exclusion is not a process to enter into lightly.

**** Waterton Academy Trust classifies category D & E as bullying incidents****

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Version	Date	Author	Change/Reference
2	Nov 2018	WAT	
3	Oct 2020	WAT	Formatting changes. Addition of reference to transphobic and gender-based bullying
4	Sept 2022	D Dickinson	Change of websites and contacts. Young minds and national bullying. Also reference to wellbeing strategies
5	July 2023	M Bretherton	Full review
6	Sept 2024	M Bretherton	No changes
7	Sept 2025	M Bretherton	Statutory references updated; safeguarding, monitoring, equality, staff culture, pupil voice and parental conduct strengthened.
8	May 2026	M Bretherton	Strengthened procedural fairness, safeguarding and Equality Act wording. Updated terminology to reflect current guidance and trauma-informed practice. Revised investigation, recording and governance wording to improve legal defensibility, confidentiality and consistency. Refined exclusion, cyberbullying and child-on-child abuse references. Removed potentially victim-blaming or subjective language and improved consistency across Appendix 3 and operational procedures.