

Anti-Bullying Policy

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An academy within:

nexus Multi Academy Trust

Learning together to be the best we can be

1. Statement Of Intent

Kelford School is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, nurturing and respectful environment where all pupils can learn, develop and thrive free from fear, intimidation, harassment or bullying.

We recognise that bullying can have a significant impact on a child's emotional wellbeing, mental health, attendance, engagement and educational outcomes. Bullying is never tolerated and all concerns will be taken seriously, investigated promptly and responded to appropriately.

As a special school, we recognise that pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) may be at increased risk of bullying and may experience additional barriers to recognising, communicating or reporting concerns. Staff will therefore use individualised approaches, communication systems and reasonable adjustments to ensure all pupils can access support.

Kelford School promotes a culture of openness and respect where pupils are encouraged to speak to trusted adults about worries or concerns. We aim to be a "telling school", where reporting bullying is viewed as helping to keep everyone safe rather than "telling tales".

This policy should be read alongside the school's:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy
- Equality Information and Objectives
- SEND Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

2. Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Prevent all forms of bullying.
- Foster an inclusive culture based upon kindness, tolerance and respect.
- Ensure pupils understand what bullying is and how to seek help.
- Ensure concerns are identified and responded to early.
- Protect children from harm and safeguard their welfare.
- Support both the child experiencing bullying and the child displaying bullying behaviours.
- Fulfil statutory safeguarding and equality duties.
- Ensure all incidents are recorded, monitored and reviewed.

3. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy is informed by:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Behaviour in Schools Guidance
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying Guidance
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Guidance
- Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes Guidance
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Guidance
- SEND Code of Practice Malicious Communications Act 1988
- DfE (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying'
- DfE (2018) 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
- DfE (2020) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'
- DfE (2024) Behaviour in Schools – Advice for Headteachers
- DfE (2024) Keeping Children Safe in Education
- DfE Preventing bullying including cyberbullying
- SEND Code of Practice

4. Equality, Inclusion and Safeguarding

Bullying is defined as persistent behaviour by an individual or group with the intention of verbally, physically, or emotionally harming another person or group. Bullying is generally characterised by:

- Repetition: Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over a period of time.
- Intent: The perpetrator(s) means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental.
- Targeting: Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.
- Power imbalance: Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations.

Vulnerable pupils are more likely to be the targets of bullying due to the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves.

Vulnerable pupils may include, but are not limited to:

- Pupils with SEND.
- Pupils who are adopted.
- Pupils suffering from a health problem.
- Pupils with caring responsibilities.
- Pupils who are or are perceived to be LGBTQ+

5.Definition of Bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group that intentionally hurts another person physically or emotionally and often involves an imbalance of power.
Bullying is usually characterised by:

Repetition

Bullying normally happens more than once and forms a pattern of behaviour.

Intentional Harm

The behaviour is intended to cause distress, fear, humiliation or harm.

Power Imbalance

The person carrying out the bullying may have real or perceived power because of factors such as:

- Physical strength
- Age
- Status
- Popularity
- Ability
- Communication skills
- Access to technology

Although bullying is often repeated, the school recognises that a single serious incident, particularly online, may have a significant and lasting impact and may therefore be treated as bullying and/or a safeguarding concern.

6.Types of Bullying

Bullying may include, but is not limited to:

Physical Bullying

- Hitting
- Kicking
- Pushing
- Spitting
- Damaging property
- Stealing belongings

Verbal Bullying

- Name calling

- Threats
- Insults
- Ridiculing
- Mocking disabilities, appearance or differences

Relational/Social Bullying
- Exclusion
- Rumour spreading
- Manipulation of friendships
- Public humiliation

Online (Cyber) Bullying
- Social media abuse
- Malicious messaging
- Image sharing
- Fake accounts
- Online exclusion
- Group chat intimidation

Prejudice-Based Bullying
Bullying linked to:
- Disability
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Ethnicity
- Sex
- Gender identity
- Sexual orientation (Protected Characteristics)

Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence
Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature including:
- Sexual comments
- Sexualised language
- Sexual teasing
- Sharing images
- Inappropriate touching
- Sexual assault

The school recognises that sexual harassment and sexual violence can occur between any children regardless of age, gender or sexuality.

Physical Bullying: Physical bullying involves any assault on a person's body, including hitting, kicking, tripping, or pushing. It can also extend to inappropriate hand gestures or stealing or breaking a victims' belongings.

Verbal Bullying: Verbal bullying involves using spoken or written words to insult or intimidate a victim. It includes name-calling, teasing, and even threats. Verbal

bullying isn't always easy to recognise because it often takes place when authority figures aren't around. Moreover, a bully can pass it off as 'banter' between friends. As a result, it can be difficult for the victim to prove. Therefore, this form of bullying can become a long-term source of stress and anxiety.

Relational Bullying: Relational bullying, which is also referred to as relational aggression or social bullying, involves actions intended to harm a victim's reputation or relationships. It can include embarrassing the victim in public, spreading rumours, purposely leaving them out of social situations, or ostracising them from a group. This can also occur online through social media and messaging platforms.

Cyberbullying: Cyberbullying is bullying that happens via electronic devices like computers, smart phones, and tablets. It can take place over text messages, social media, apps, or online forums and involves posting or sending harmful content, including messages and photos, and sharing personal information that causes humiliation.

The school will be alert to instances of the sharing of indecent imagery of pupils amongst the school cohort, instances will be managed in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Sexual Bullying: Sexual bullying is online or in-person bullying that involves sexual comments or actions, including sexual jokes and name-calling, crude gestures, spreading sexual rumours, sending sexual photos or videos, and touching or grabbing someone without permission. It can occur between two children of any age and can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Specific Types of Sexual Bullying

Sexist bullying: Bullying based on sexist attitudes expressed in a way to demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Sexist bullying may sometimes be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviours.

Prejudicial Bullying: Prejudicial bullying involves online or in-person bullying based on the target's race, ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation. It is based on stereotypes and is often a result of the belief that some people deserve to be treated with less respect than others.

Specific Types of Prejudicial Bullying

Racist bullying: Bullying another person based on their ethnic background, religion or skin colour. Racist bullying is a criminal offence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Public Order Act 1986.

Homophobic bullying: Bullying another person because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

Transphobic bullying: Bullying based on another person's gender identity or gender presentation, or for not conforming to dominant gender roles.

Socioeconomic bullying: Bullying based on prejudices against the perceived social status of the victim, including, but not limited to, their economic status, their parents' occupations, their health or nutrition level, or the perceived "quality" of their clothing or belongings.

7. Vulnerable Groups

Some pupils may be particularly vulnerable to bullying, including:

- Pupils with SEND
- Autistic pupils
- Pupils with communication difficulties
- Looked After and Previously Looked After Children
- Adopted children
- Young carers
- Pupils experiencing mental health difficulties
- Pupils with medical conditions
- Pupils who are LGBTQ+
- Pupils perceived to be LGBTQ+

Staff will take reasonable adjustments and communication needs into account when investigating concerns.

8.Bullying and Child-on-Child Abuse

The school recognises that bullying may constitute child-on-child abuse.

This includes:

- Sexual harassment
- Sexual violence
- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Online abuse
- Image sharing
- Coercion
- Abuse within intimate relationships
- Hate incidents

All staff will maintain the attitude that: **"It could happen here."**

Staff will never dismiss abusive behaviour as:

- Banter
- Part of growing up

- Having a laugh
- Boys being boys

Any concerns will be reported immediately to the DSL.

9.Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Bullying

The school recognises the increasing availability of artificial intelligence technologies.

Bullying may occur through the use of AI including:

- Deepfake images
- Deepfake videos
- Manipulated audio
- AI-generated messages
- Impersonation
- Harassing or abusive content

Any misuse of AI to threaten, humiliate, harass or bully another person will be managed through this policy, the Behaviour Policy and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

10.Preventing Bullying

The school adopts a proactive approach to preventing bullying through:

- A positive school culture
- Clear expectations for behaviour
- Positive Behaviour Support approaches
- RSHE education
- PSHE education
- Assemblies
- Safeguarding curriculum
- Online safety education
- Communication and interaction programmes
- Social skills teaching
- Pupil voice opportunities
- Staff training

Pupils will be taught:

- Respectful relationships
- Equality and diversity
- Consent and personal boundaries
- Safe use of technology
- How to report concerns

- How to seek help for themselves or others

11.Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Evaluating and reviewing this policy to ensure that it is not discriminatory.
- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring that the school adopts a tolerant and open-minded policy towards difference.
- Ensuring the school is inclusive.
- Ensuring compliance with safeguarding requirements.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring effective implementation of the policy.
- Monitoring patterns and trends.
- Reporting significant concerns to governors.
- Ensuring staff training is provided.
- Ensuring robust recording systems are maintained.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for:

- Overseeing safeguarding-related bullying concerns.
- Making referrals where necessary.
- Supporting staff investigating incidents.
- Monitoring vulnerable pupils.

All staff are responsible for:

- Challenging bullying behaviour, educating about trust and respect
- Promoting the 3 threads of **Be kind, Be safe, Be the best you can be**
- Recording concerns promptly using school procedures and systems
- Reporting safeguarding concerns immediately.
- Supporting pupils involved.
- Promoting respectful relationships.

Parents and carers should:

- Report concerns promptly.
- Being watchful of their child's behaviour, attitude and characteristics and informing the relevant staff members of any changes.
- Work in partnership with school.
- Support agreed actions.

Pupils are encouraged to:

- Be respectful and follow the 3 key threads -Be, Kind, Be safe, Be the best you can be.
- Support others appropriately.
- Speak to a trusted adult if worried.

- Informing a member of staff if they witness bullying or are a victim of bullying.
- Not making counter-threats if they are victims of bullying.
- Walking away from dangerous situations and avoiding involving other pupils in incidents.
- Keeping evidence of cyber bullying and informing a member of staff should they fall victim to cyber bullying.

12.Recognising Signs of Bullying

Possible indicators include:

- Becoming anxious or lacking confidence
- Distress
- Withdrawal
- Not wanting to attend school or saying they feel unwell
- Damaged belongings or missing money
- Changes in behaviour
- Reduced confidence
- Changes in friendship groups
- Self-isolation
- Unexplained injuries
- Increased emotional dysregulation
- Lack of or change in appetite
- Changes in online behaviour or becoming upset about messages received

These signs may also indicate wider safeguarding or mental health concerns and must always be explored appropriately.

Although the signs outlined above may not be due to bullying, they may be due to deeper social, emotional or mental health issues.

Staff will be aware of the potential factors that may indicate a pupil is likely to exhibit bullying behaviours, including, but not limited to, the following:

- They have experienced mental health problems, which have led to them becoming more easily aggravated
- They have been the victim of domestic abuse
- Their academic performance has started to fall and they are showing signs of stress

ASD - An autistic child can be helped to distinguish between bullying and one-off incidents or misunderstandings by teaching him/her social skills through role-play, or through problem-solving social scenarios. Older children may benefit from multiple-choice quizzes, in which they are taught to select appropriate responses to hypothetical situations. Some children and young people with an ASD may need very

explicit explanations of bullying, and perhaps a visual reference (e.g. a list or set of photographs, pictures and symbols) that illustrates the difference between scenarios that constitute bullying and those which are less serious peer conflicts or misunderstandings. Other pupils may prefer written or spoken explanations – account needs to be taken of individual learning styles and communication methods.

13.Preventing Child-On-Child Sexual Abuse

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of peer-on-peer sexual abuse, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

Sexual harassment refers to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that occurs online or offline.

Sexual harassment violates a child's dignity and makes them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated, and can create a hostile, sexualised or offensive environment. If left unchallenged, sexual harassment can create an atmosphere that normalises inappropriate behaviour and may lead to sexual violence.

Sexual violence refers to the three following offences:

- Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- Assault by Penetration: A person (A) commits an offence if s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- Sexual Assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

The school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy outlines procedures for addressing child-on-child sexual abuse, and the procedures in place will be adhered to if there are any instances of sexual harassment or sexual violence.

To prevent child-on-child abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, the school will educate pupils about abuse, its forms and the importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others through the PSHE Curriculum, assemblies and themed days.

The school will also ensure that pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum in PSHE lessons, RSE and group sessions. Such content will be age and stage of development specific, and tackle issues such as the following:

- Healthy relationships

- Respectful behaviour
- Gender roles, stereotyping and equality
- LGBTQ+
- Body confidence and self-esteem
- Prejudiced behaviour
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment is always wrong
- Addressing cultures of sexual harassment

All staff will be aware that pupils of any age and sex are capable of abusing their peers and will never tolerate abuse as "banter" or "part of growing up".

All staff will be aware that child-on-child abuse can be manifested in many ways, including sexting and gender issues, such as girls being sexually touched or assaulted, and boys being subjected to hazing/initiation type of violence which aims to cause physical, emotional or psychological harm.

Where a pupil is found to have been involved in harmful sexual behaviour, the school will help the pupil to move forward from the incident by supporting them in adopting more positive behaviour patterns and attitudes.

All staff will be made aware of the heightened vulnerability of pupils with SEND, who are more likely to be abused than their peers.

Staff will not assume that possible indicators of abuse relate to the pupil's SEND and will always explore indicators further.

Staff will be aware that LGBTQ+ pupils are more likely to be targeted by their peers. In some cases, pupils who are perceived to be LGBTQ+, whether they are or not, can be just as vulnerable to abuse as LGBTQ+ pupils.

The school's response to sexual violence and sexual harassment between pupils of the same sex will be equally as robust as it is for incidents between pupils of the opposite sex.

Pupils will be made aware of how to raise concerns or make a report and how any reports will be handled – this includes the process for reporting concerns about friends or peers.

If a pupil has been harmed, is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to children's social care services (MASH).

14.Generative artificial intelligence (AI)

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Bard.

Kelford School recognises that AI has many uses to help pupils learn, but may also have the potential to be used to bully others. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.

Kelford School will treat any use of AI to bully pupils in line with our Anti-Bullying, Behaviour and Safeguarding policies.

15.Managing Disclosures

Pupils may report concerns to:

- Any trusted member of staff
- Class teachers
- Teaching assistants
- Safeguarding staff
- Senior leaders

Parents and carers should report concerns as soon as possible.
All reports will be taken seriously.

Anonymous concerns will be investigated where sufficient information is provided.

Victims will always be taken seriously, reassured, supported and kept safe.

Victims will never be made to feel like they are causing a problem or made to feel ashamed.

If a friend of a victim makes a report or a member of staff overhears a conversation, staff will act – they will never assume that someone else will deal with it. The basic principles remain the same as when a victim reports an incident; however, staff will consider why the victim has not chosen to make a report themselves and the discussion will be handled sensitively.

If staff are in any doubt over how to handle an incident or report, they will speak to the DSL.

Tell someone that you trust – research shows that children do not always trust and tell adults if they are bullied and will tell their friends or peers. Reports by peers should always be acted upon.

16. Managing Reports and Investigations

The school will:

- Listen carefully to all parties.
- Avoid assumptions.
- Gather information fairly.
- Consider communication needs.
- Record findings.
- Assess safeguarding risks.
- Liaise with parents where appropriate.
- Involve external agencies if necessary.

Where there is immediate risk of harm, the DSL will take urgent safeguarding action including referrals to Children's Social Care and/or Police where appropriate.

17. Recording and Monitoring

All bullying incidents will be:

- Recorded electronically.
- Categorised by type.
- Monitored by senior leaders.
- Analysed termly for trends and patterns.

Data will be used to:

- Inform staff training.
- Review practices.
- Improve safeguarding arrangements.
- Target preventative work.

18. Confidentiality

The school will only engage with staff and agencies required to support the victim and/or be involved in any investigation.

If a victim asks the school not to tell anyone about the disclosure, the school will not make this promise, in line with the Safeguarding Policy.

Even without the victim's consent, the information may still be lawfully shared if it is in the public interest and protects children from harm.

The DSL will consider the following when making confidentiality decisions:

- Parents will be informed unless it will place the victim at greater risk.

- If a pupil is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger or has been harmed, a referral will be made to MASH.
- Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assaults are crimes – reports containing any such crimes will be passed to the police.

More information regarding the school's stance on preventing child on child sexual abuse is available in our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

19. Responding to Bullying

Responses will be proportionate and educational whilst maintaining safety.
Actions may include:

- Restorative approaches.
- Positive Behaviour Support interventions.
- Mediation where appropriate.
- Increased supervision.
- Behaviour plans.
- Individual support programmes.
- Consequences in line with the Behaviour Policy.
- Safeguarding referrals.

The needs of the child experiencing bullying will always be prioritised.

Support for Pupils
Pupils Experiencing Bullying
Support may include:

- Pupils who have been bullied will be supported in the following ways:
- Being listened to, including having an immediate opportunity to meet with SLT or a member of staff of their choice
- Being reassured
- Being offered support with referrals to appropriate agencies where necessary
- Access to safe adults and buddies
- Access to safe spaces which may involve a change in class
- Emotional support
- Wellbeing interventions including support for mental health
- Social communication support

Pupils Displaying Bullying Behaviour
Support may include:

- Receiving a consequence for their actions using the principle of restorative justice
- Being able to discuss what happened and reflection activities to help to understand their behaviour
- Being helped to understand what they did wrong and why they need to change their behaviour
- Appropriate assistance from parents/carers

- Appropriate interventions
- Emotional regulation support and mental health support
- Social communication interventions
- Behaviour support plans
- Family support
- External agency involvement where appropriate

When investigating a bullying incident, the following procedures are adopted:

- The victim, alleged perpetrator and witnesses are all spoken to separately
- If a pupil is injured, members of staff take the pupil immediately to a first aider for a medical opinion on the extent of their injuries
- A room is used that allows for privacy during conversations
- A witness is used for serious incidents
- If appropriate, the alleged perpetrator, the victim and witnesses, are asked to communicate details of the incident; this may need prompting with questions and appropriate communication tools from the member of staff to obtain the full picture
- Premature assumptions are not made, as it is important not to be judgemental at this stage
- Members of staff listen carefully to all accounts, being non-confrontational and not assigning blame until the investigation is complete
- The headteacher or delegated senior leader will make a decision about actions when presented with all of the facts and accounts.

Due to the potential for sexist and transphobic bullying to be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviour, staff members involved in dealing with the incident are required to consider whether there is a need for safeguarding processes to be implemented and if so, report in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy.

20.Consequences

If the headteacher is satisfied that bullying did take place:

- The pupil will be helped to understand the consequences of their actions.

- The headteacher will inform the pupil of the type of consequence to be used in this instance, e.g. restorative practice and social and communication interventions in accordance with a positive behaviour support ethos

- The parents or carers will be informed of bullying incidents and what action is being taken.

21.Bullying Outside of School

The headteacher has a specific statutory power to discipline pupils for poor behaviour outside of the school premises. Section 89 (5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives the headteacher the power to regulate pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises, and therefore, not under the lawful charge of a school staff member.

Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for their behaving outside of the school premises. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and acted upon. In all cases of bullying, members of staff can only discipline the pupil on school premises, or elsewhere when the pupil is under the lawful control of the member of staff, e.g. on a school trip.

The headteacher is responsible for determining whether it is appropriate to notify the police, or action taken against a pupil.

22. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner where:

- Legislation changes.
- National guidance is updated.
- Safeguarding requirements change.
- Monitoring identifies a need for review.