



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Reviewed: October 2026

Date of Next Review: October 2027

Responsible Officer: C.Wood

The response and review timescales in this draft are proposed school standards for approval. They are not statutory deadlines.

Policy objectives

- Prevent and tackle all forms of bullying and provide a safe environment in which pupils can learn and fulfil their potential.
- Develop an anti-bullying culture in which bullying of children, young people or adults is not tolerated.
- Ensure pupils and families know how to report concerns and that staff respond promptly, consistently and sensitively.
- Protect pupils affected, address the behaviour of those responsible and check that bullying has stopped.
- Involve pupils, staff, parents and carers in developing and evaluating our approach.

Our approach reflects the SHARPLES values: Smart, Hardworking, Ambitious, Respectful, Pride, Learn, Excellence and Self-discipline.

Related policies and guidance

This policy should be read alongside the [Behaviour Policy](#), [Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures September 2026](#), [Online Safety Policy](#), [Mobile Phone Policy](#), SEND Policy, [Complaints Policy](#), Staff code of conduct and the school's procedures for [searching, screening and confiscation](#). PSHCE, RSE and computing teaching contribute to prevention.

It takes account of DfE Preventing and tackling bullying, [Keeping children safe in education 2026](#), [Behaviour in schools](#), and the [suspension and permanent exclusion statutory guidance](#) effective from 26 July 2026. Relevant sources are listed at the end of this policy.

Legal framework

Relevant legislation includes the following, as amended and applicable to the school:

- [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#); [Education Act 2002](#); [Education Act 2011](#); and [Education Act 1996](#).
- [Equality Act 2010](#) and [Children and Families Act 2014](#).
- [Children Act 1989](#) and [Children Act 2004](#).
- [Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#).
- [School Discipline \(Pupil Exclusions and Reviews\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#).
- [Protection from Harassment Act 1997](#), [Public Order Act 1986](#) and relevant communications offences, including those under the [Malicious Communications Act 1988](#) and [Online Safety Act 2023](#) where applicable.

Not every bullying incident is a criminal offence. Where conduct may be criminal, the DSL and Headteacher will consider police involvement and safeguarding action. This policy does not replace statutory procedures.

Responsibilities

- The trustees oversee the policy, its review and the effectiveness of the school's response, including trends and outcomes.
- The Headteacher ensures the policy is communicated and implemented and that disciplinary decisions are fair, consistent, reasonable and proportionate. Only the Headteacher, or a properly appointed acting Headteacher, may suspend or permanently exclude a pupil.
- The Deputy Headteacher and DSL has strategic oversight, ensures safeguarding concerns receive the appropriate response and oversees recording, escalation and quality assurance. The safeguarding team support this work.
- The relevant Year Coordinator normally investigates a bullying case, coordinates evidence gathering, pupil support and parent communication, and records follow-up. The DSL or senior leader may appoint another case lead where necessary. A named lead must be recorded for every case.

- All Year Coordinators have completed DSL training and support the Designated Safeguarding Lead in responding to concerns. The DSL retains overall responsibility for safeguarding oversight.
- All staff, including teaching, support, administrative and site staff, act on concerns, protect pupils, record accurately and report promptly. Form tutors, teachers and teaching assistants remain alert to patterns because of their regular contact with pupils.
- The SENDCo advises on communication needs, support and reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND, working with the case lead and the safeguarding team.
- Parents and carers report concerns, support their children and work with school to address bullying. Pupils follow the policy, treat others respectfully and tell a trusted adult if they experience or witness bullying.

Definition of bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group that is repeated over time and intentionally causes physical or emotional harm to another person. It often involves an imbalance of power that makes it difficult for the person affected to defend themselves. This may arise from physical strength, age, social status, group size, access to information or online reach.

Bullying can include name-calling, taunting, mocking, offensive comments, physical violence, taking belongings, offensive graffiti, spreading hurtful rumours and deliberately excluding someone from groups. It can take place face to face, through gaming, messaging, social media or other digital services.

Online repetition can include repeated sharing, viewing or circulation of a single harmful post or image. Bullying between pupils is a form of child-on-child abuse and can seriously affect emotional development, mental health, attendance and learning.

A disagreement between pupils of similar power is not necessarily bullying. However, all reports of harm will be taken seriously and addressed. Staff will not wait for behaviour to repeat, or for agreement about the label “bullying”, before protecting a pupil or reporting a safeguarding concern. The school takes a zero-tolerance approach to abuse: it must never be dismissed as banter, a joke or part of growing up. This means that every concern is addressed; sanctions remain proportionate to the circumstances.

Forms and types of bullying

Bullying can happen to anyone. This policy covers all types and forms of bullying including:

- Bullying related to physical appearance
- Bullying of young carers, children in care or otherwise related to home circumstances
- Bullying related to physical/mental health conditions
- Physical bullying
- Emotional bullying
- Sexual bullying
- Bullying via technology, known as online or cyberbullying
- Prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying, including:
 - Bullying related to race, religion, faith and belief and for those without faith
 - Bullying related to ethnicity, nationality or culture
 - Bullying related to Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND)
 - Bullying related to sexual orientation (homophobic/biphobic bullying)
 - Bullying related to sex or gender, including sexist and transphobic bullying.
 - Bullying against teenage parents (pregnancy and maternity under the Equality Act)
 - Bullying using generative artificial intelligence, including fabricated images, audio, videos or impersonation.

School ethos

- Sharples School community recognises that all forms of bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals; it can create a barrier to learning and have serious consequences for mental wellbeing.

- By effectively preventing and tackling bullying our school can help to create a safe and disciplined environment, where pupils are able to learn and fulfil their potential.

Our community

- Monitors and reviews our anti-bullying policy and practice on a regular basis.
- Supports staff to promote positive relationships to help prevent bullying.
- Recognises that some members of our community may be more vulnerable to bullying and its impact than others; this may include children with SEND. Being aware of this will help us to develop effective strategies to prevent bullying from happening and provide appropriate support, if required.
- Will intervene by identifying and tackling bullying behaviour appropriately and promptly.
- Ensures our pupils are aware that bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively; that everyone should feel safe to learn and abide by the anti-bullying policy.
- Requires all members of the community to work with the school to uphold the anti-bullying policy.
- Recognises the potential impact of bullying on the wider family of those affected so will work in partnership with parents/carers regarding all reported bullying concerns and will seek to keep them informed at all stages.
- Will deal promptly with grievances regarding the school response to bullying in line with our complaints policy.
- Seeks to learn from good anti-bullying practice elsewhere.
- Utilises support from the Local Authority and other relevant organisations when appropriate.

Reporting concerns

Pupils can tell their form tutor, Year Coordinator, teacher, teaching assistant, DSL or Deputy DSL, or any other trusted member of staff. Sharples Safe is available through the school website for pupils who prefer not to report face to face. Witnesses and pupils who are worried about someone else are encouraged to report too.

Parents and carers should contact their child's Year Coordinator through the usual school contact routes. Urgent safeguarding concerns should be raised directly with the DSL or Deputy DSL. Online reports are not an emergency service and should not be relied on for an immediate response outside school hours. In an emergency, contact the emergency services.

Staff will explain that information may need to be shared to keep pupils safe. They will not promise secrecy. Pupils will be listened to without blame, and reporting will not lead to punishment for having raised a concern in good faith. Any intimidation or retaliation following a report will be treated seriously and prompt further action.

Where there is a safeguarding concern, staff must report promptly to the DSL or safeguarding team. Urgent concerns must be communicated directly without delay; recording on Bromcom alone is not sufficient.

If the DSL or safeguarding team are unavailable, staff must follow the escalation arrangements in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Immediate protective action or a necessary referral must not be delayed.

Responding to bullying

Immediate safety and safeguarding assessment

The member of staff receiving or witnessing a concern must act promptly to protect the pupil, arrange medical help if needed, listen calmly and make a factual record. Staff should use open or clarifying questions and avoid leading questions or attempting to conduct a child protection investigation. The pupil's own words should be recorded wherever possible.

Concerns must be passed to the Year Coordinator and recorded on Bromcom as soon as practicable, normally on the same school day. Where there is a safeguarding concern, staff must also report directly to the DSL or safeguarding team immediately; entering a record alone is not sufficient for urgent concerns. If Bromcom is unavailable, staff must use the safeguarding record-of-concern procedure.

The DSL and safeguarding team will assess concerns involving sexual violence, sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour, threats, coercion, serious violence, exploitation or sexual images. These may require a child protection response, including a risk assessment and referral to children's social care or the police. Staff must follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Urgent protection and referrals must not wait for the bullying investigation to finish.

Investigation and protective action

The Year Coordinator, or another named case lead, will review the concern with the DSL or senior leader where appropriate. The case lead will arrange appropriate enquiries, hear pupils separately, gather relevant witness accounts and available evidence, consider previous incidents and assess the impact on each pupil. External agency advice will guide the timing and scope of school enquiries where necessary.

Enquiries must be fair and sensitive. Pupils will have suitable support and communication adjustments. Findings and reasons will be recorded, including where evidence is incomplete or conflicting. An unresolved allegation does not remove the need for protection, support or monitoring.

The school will agree protective arrangements with the pupil affected wherever possible. These may include a named trusted adult, safe access to pastoral support, additional supervision, seating or grouping arrangements and support at break, lunch or on journeys. Changes should avoid unnecessarily restricting the education or opportunities of the pupil affected.

Relevant staff will receive the information they need to support and supervise pupils. The case lead will agree an initial plan and record the responsibilities, parent communication and review date if necessary. Concerns arising outside school, including online or on transport, will be assessed and addressed where they affect pupils or the school community. The DSL may liaise with other schools and agencies.

Communication and proposed response timescales

Immediate safety and safeguarding action will be taken without delay. For other case management, the school will aim to acknowledge a parent's report within one school day, provide an initial update within five school days, and check the pupil's safety and wellbeing within two school days of the initial protective action. These are proposed school standards, subject to approval, rather than statutory deadlines.

The case lead will explain the next steps and agree further update arrangements if enquiries take longer. Parents and carers of pupils involved will normally be contacted promptly, unless the DSL assesses that doing so would increase risk or conflict with safeguarding or police advice. The school can explain its response and protective measures without disclosing another pupil's confidential information.

Decisions sanctions and support

The school will decide the appropriate response under the Behaviour Policy, taking account of the evidence, seriousness, impact, repetition, pupil needs and relevant safeguarding information. Pupils' and parents' views will inform the response, but disciplinary decisions remain the school's responsibility. Support for all pupils involved will continue alongside sanctions.

Suspension and permanent exclusion decisions are reserved to the Headteacher or properly appointed acting Headteacher and must be lawful, reasonable, fair and proportionate. Facts are established on the balance of probabilities. The Headteacher will consider the pupil's views, contributing factors, SEND and disability duties, reasonable adjustments and relevant professional advice.

Permanent exclusion will only be considered in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the Behaviour Policy and where allowing the pupil to remain would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in school. It is a last resort and will not follow automatically from a bullying label. Notifications, review rights, education arrangements and reintegration will follow the statutory guidance and the school's exclusion procedures.

Follow up escalation and closure

When necessary, the case lead will record an initial review within ten school days of protective action, with further checks normally at approximately four weeks and sooner where risk requires. These are proposed school review standards. Reviews will consider the pupil's account, attendance, wellbeing, staff observations, parent feedback and any recurrence or retaliation.

If bullying continues, protection, support and sanctions will be reviewed promptly and the case escalated to the Senior leadership Team or Headteacher. The Headteacher will be involved in serious or persistent cases. The DSL will reconsider risk and external referrals where appropriate.

A case will not be closed solely because a sanction has been completed. The case lead must record why closure is appropriate, including the pupil's views, evidence that the behaviour has stopped, remaining support and how to report any recurrence. Cases may be reopened at any time.

Recording and confidentiality

Bromcom records must include the initial report, pupils and witnesses involved, date and location, the nature of the behaviour, any discriminatory element, immediate action, case lead, relevant evidence, risk assessment, pupil and parent communication, decisions and rationale, support, sanctions and follow-up outcomes. Records should distinguish reports, established facts and professional judgement.

Safeguarding records must be held within the appropriate restricted arrangements, with DSL oversight. Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis and handled under the school's data protection and retention procedures. The case lead and DSL will consider linked incidents and patterns across pupils, year groups and settings.

Artificial intelligence and image based abuse

Generative AI may support learning but can also be used to bully, impersonate, humiliate or intimidate. This includes fabricated messages, voice recordings, images and videos, including deepfakes. Creating or sharing such material to harm another person will be addressed under this policy and the Behaviour Policy, with safeguarding action where required.

Suspected nude or sexual images of anyone under 18, including AI-generated images, must be reported immediately to the DSL. Staff and pupils must not seek out, screenshot, copy, print, save or forward these images. Staff must not routinely view them or ask pupils to display them. Any exceptional viewing decision must follow the relevant safeguarding guidance and be recorded by the DSL.

The DSL and safeguarding team will manage risk, referral, device handling and any content-removal action in line with the school's safeguarding procedures and current guidance. Staff must not delete material that may be needed as evidence or conduct an independent investigation into suspected criminal conduct.

Cyberbullying

When responding to cyberbullying concerns, the school will:

- Act as soon as an incident has been reported or identified.
- Provide appropriate support for the person who has been cyberbullied and work with the person who has carried out the bullying to ensure that it does not happen again.
- Help pupils preserve ordinary messages or other non-sexual evidence safely. Suspected sexual images of children must be handled under the 'Artificial intelligence and image based abuse' section above and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.; pupils and staff must not copy or forward them.
- Take reasonable steps to identify those responsible, which may include:
 - Looking at use of the school systems;
 - Identifying and interviewing possible witnesses;
 - Contact the service provider and the police, if necessary.

- Work with the individuals and online service providers to prevent the incident from spreading and assist in removing offensive or upsetting material from circulation. This may include:
- Support reports to a service provider to remove content if those involved are unable to be identified or if those involved refuse to or are unable to delete content.
- Confiscate devices and examine data only where authorised and lawful, in accordance with DfE guidance and the school's searching and confiscation procedures.
- Consider removal or deletion of harmful content only after assessing whether it must be preserved for safeguarding or police purposes, and in accordance with relevant guidance.
- Apply proportionate sanctions where responsibility is established and provide education and support to prevent recurrence.
- Provide information to staff and pupils regarding steps they can take to protect themselves online. This may include:
 - Advising those targeted not to retaliate or reply;
 - Providing advice on blocking or removing people from contact lists;
 - Helping those involved to think carefully about what private information they may have in the public domain.

Supporting pupils

Support for pupils who have been bullied

- Reassure the pupil and providing continuous pastoral support.
- Offer an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with their teacher, the designated safeguarding lead, or a member of staff of their choice.
- Offer help to keep a safe record of incidents, discuss practical responses and provide support to rebuild confidence. The school remains responsible for addressing the bullying; the pupil is not expected to solve it.
- Work towards restoring self-esteem and confidence.
- Provide ongoing support, this may include working and speaking with staff, offer formal counselling, engage with parents and carers.
- Where necessary, seek further advice or support through Early or Family Help, children's social care, mental health services or other specialist organisations.

Support for pupils responsible for bullying

- Discussing what happened, establishing the concern and the need to change.
- Informing parents/carers to help change the attitude and behaviour of the child.
- Providing appropriate education and support regarding their behaviour or actions.
- If online, requesting that content be removed and reporting accounts/content to the service provider.
- Apply sanctions under the Behaviour Policy, which may include warnings, detentions, removal of privileges, Reflection Unit or Behaviour Intervention Centre placement, suspension or permanent exclusion where the relevant criteria are met. Restrictions on online access must not prevent access to essential education or support.
- Where necessary, seek specialist support or involve Early or Family Help, children's social care, mental health services or the police.

SEND and other vulnerabilities

Pupils with SEND may face barriers to reporting and may be affected without showing obvious signs. Staff must not assume that changes in behaviour, communication, attendance or wellbeing are solely attributable to SEND. The SENDCo and DSL will advise on appropriate support, including a trusted adult, accessible explanations, communication aids, additional time and suitable interview arrangements.

The school will consider the needs of young carers, looked-after and previously looked-after children, pupils experiencing family difficulties and others at heightened risk. The same care applies to pupils

affected and those responsible. Reasonable adjustments and individual support do not remove the responsibility to protect other pupils.

Support will also be offered to witnesses and other pupils affected. Children may disclose gradually, so staff will keep opportunities for reporting open. The school will address racism, faith-targeted abuse and other discriminatory incidents, including those based on a perceived characteristic. Children questioning their gender and pupils perceived to be lesbian, gay or bisexual will receive appropriate protection and support.

Restorative approaches

Restorative work may help repair harm where it is safe and appropriate. Participation must be voluntary for the pupil affected and informed by risk assessment. Pupils will not be required to meet those responsible, accept an apology or take part in mediation. Restorative work does not replace safeguarding action, necessary sanctions or ongoing monitoring.

Supporting adults

Our school takes measures to prevent and tackle bullying among pupils; however, it is equally important to recognise that bullying of adults, including staff and parents, whether by pupils, parents or other staff members, is unacceptable.

Support for adults affected

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the concern with the safeguarding team, a senior member of staff and/or the Headteacher.
- Advising them to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to concerns and build resilience, as appropriate.
- Where work-related bullying occurs outside school or online, consider appropriate action under the relevant staff, complaints, safeguarding or behaviour procedures, according to the circumstances.
- Reporting offensive or upsetting content and/or accounts to the service provider, where the bullying has occurred online.
- Reassuring and offering appropriate support.
- Working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance.

Responding to bullying by adults

- Discussing what happened with a senior member of staff and/or the Headteacher to establish the concern.
- Establishing whether a legitimate grievance or concern has been raised and signposting to the school's official complaints procedures.
- If online, requesting that content be removed.
- Instigating disciplinary, civil or legal action as appropriate or required.

Concerns about an adult's conduct towards a pupil must be referred under the safeguarding procedures for allegations or low-level concerns, as appropriate. Staff bullying is also addressed through the relevant grievance, disciplinary or whistleblowing procedures. Where a concern involves the Headteacher, the relevant trustee contact route must be used.

Preventing bullying

Environment

The whole school community will:

- Create and support an inclusive environment, which promotes a culture of mutual respect, consideration and care for others, which will be upheld by all.
- Recognise that any member of the community may experience or perpetrate bullying. Bullying between pupils is child-on-child abuse.

- Recognise that children with SEND may be disproportionately affected by bullying and provide accessible reporting and additional pastoral support where required.
- Openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as: children with different family situations, such as Looked After Children or those with caring responsibilities, religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related difference.
- Challenge practice and language, which does not uphold the school values of tolerance, non-discrimination and respect towards others.
- Promote responsible use of technology and social media, alongside the school's mobile-free arrangements and Mobile Phone Policy.
- Work with staff, the wider community and outside agencies to prevent and tackle concerns including all forms of prejudice-driven bullying.
- Celebrate success and achievements to promote and build a positive school ethos.

Policy and support

The whole school community will:

- Provide accessible ways for pupils, staff and parents/carers to report concerns and obtain support, including Sharples Safe on the school website. Anonymous reports will be taken seriously; safeguarding information will be shared only with those who need it.
- Regularly update and evaluate our practice to consider the developments of technology and provide up-to-date advice and education to all members of the community regarding positive online behaviour.
- Take appropriate, proportionate and reasonable action, in line with existing school policies, for any bullying brought to the school's attention, which involves or affects pupils, even when they are not on school premises; for example, when using school transport or online etc.
- Implement appropriate disciplinary sanctions; the consequences of bullying will reflect the seriousness of the incident, so that others see that bullying is unacceptable.
- Use appropriate educational and restorative approaches to address harm, alongside support and sanctions where necessary.

Education and training

The school community will:

- Train all staff including teaching staff, support staff (e.g. administration staff, lunchtime support staff and site support staff) and pastoral staff, to identify all forms of bullying and take appropriate action, following the school's policy and procedures, including recording and reporting incidents.
- Consider a range of opportunities and approaches for addressing bullying throughout the curriculum and other activities, such as: displays, assemblies, peer support, the school/student council, etc.
- Collaborate with other local educational settings as appropriate, and during key times of the year, for example during transition.
- Ensure anti-bullying has a high profile throughout the year, reinforced through key opportunities such as anti-bullying week.
- Provide systematic opportunities to develop pupils' social and emotional skills, including building their resilience and self-esteem.

Involvement of parents and carers

We will:

- Take steps to involve parents and carers in developing policies and procedures, to ensure they are aware that the school does not tolerate any form of bullying.
- Make sure that key information about bullying (including policies and named points of contact) is available to parents/carers in a variety of formats, including via the school website.
- Ensure all parents/carers know who to contact if they are worried about bullying and where to access independent advice.
- Work with all parents/carers and the local community to address issues beyond the school gates that give rise to bullying.

- Ensure that parents work with the school to role model positive behaviour for pupils, both on and offline.
- Ensure all parents/carers know about our complaints procedure and how to use it effectively, to raise concerns in an appropriate manner.
- If a parent or carer believes that bullying is continuing or that the response has been insufficient, they should contact the Year Coordinator or Senior Leadership Team. They may also raise a complaint through the school's Complaints Policy. Protective action and monitoring will continue while concerns are considered.

Monitoring and review

The Deputy Headteacher and DSL will review bullying records with Year Coordinators contributing case information. Reviews will examine repeat incidents, discriminatory bullying, locations, year groups, vulnerable groups, online patterns, the timeliness of response and whether support and sanctions have reduced harm.

Pupil voice, parent feedback and staff observations will inform evaluation. A low number of reports alone will not be treated as evidence that bullying is absent. Leaders will consider whether pupils feel safe, know how to report and trust the school to respond.

The Headteacher will receive information about serious or persistent concerns and emerging patterns. Identified improvements will inform staff training, supervision, curriculum planning and school improvement work.

The policy will be reviewed annually and earlier where legislation, guidance, a serious incident or evaluation identifies a need for change. Pupils, staff, parents and carers will have opportunities to contribute. The school will publish the approved policy and communicate its reporting routes and expectations.

Guidance and supporting organisations

The school will use current versions of the guidance below. Links to organisations are sources of information and support; their inclusion does not replace the school's safeguarding procedures.

School and national guidance

[Sharples Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy September 2026](#)

[DfE Preventing and tackling bullying](#)

[DfE Keeping children safe in education 2026](#)

[DfE Behaviour in schools](#)

[DfE Suspension and permanent exclusion guidance effective 26 July 2026](#)

[DfE Searching screening and confiscation](#)

[UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi nudes guidance](#)

[DfE SEND code of practice](#)

[The Key Anti bullying policies and examples](#)

The Key is a supplementary policy resource. Some content requires membership; the statutory and school guidance above takes precedence.

Advice and specialist support

General bullying and wellbeing

[Anti-Bullying Alliance](#) • [Childline](#) • [Family Lives](#) • [NSPCC](#) • [YoungMinds](#) • [The Diana Award](#) • [Victim Support](#) • [MindEd](#)

Prevention and restorative practice

PSHE Association • Restorative Justice Council

SEND and visible difference

Changing Faces • Mencap

Online safety

Childnet • Internet Watch Foundation • UK Safer Internet Centre • CEOP Education

Race religion and nationality

Anne Frank Trust • Kick It Out • Report It • Stop Hate UK • Tell MAMA • Educate Against Hate • Show Racism the Red Card

Homophobic biphobic and transphobic bullying

Barnardo's • METRO • EACH • The Proud Trust • Schools OUT • Stonewall

Sexual harassment and sexual bullying

End Violence Against Women Coalition • Anti-Bullying Alliance

Young carers

Carers Trust