The Henslow School and Evolution School
Anti-bullying Policy

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Introduction

At The Henslow School and Evolution School, we are aware that students 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 students.

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful for us to discriminate against, harass or victimise a student because of a protected characteristic. The public sector equality duty does not apply to independent schools, but we choose to work to its aims:

- Removing unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations, between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.

In both schools, we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students and young people and expect all staff to share this commitment. Under the Children Act 1989, a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a student is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Where this is the case, the school staff should report their concerns to their Designated Safeguarding Lead or Local Authority safeguarding team.

Bullying, including cyberbullying and prejudice-based bullying, is a form of child-on-child abuse (Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, Part one, paragraph 37). Any concern that bullying may be child-on-child abuse is passed to the DSL straight away and dealt with under the child-on-child abuse section of our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2026-2027.

We take a zero-tolerance approach. Abuse is never passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" (KCSIE 2026, paragraph 193). Even when no bullying is reported, it may still be happening, so staff stay alert to it.

Our students have SEND. Students with SEND can be more prone to peer isolation and bullying, may be affected without showing outward signs, and may find it hard to tell us what is happening (KCSIE 2026, paragraph 249). Staff do not assume that changes in a student's behaviour or mood are down to their needs without looking further.

This policy is closely linked with our Positive Behaviour Policy, our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, our School Code of Conduct and the School's Vision, Aims and Values.

Principles

It is the responsibility of the proprietors and the senior leadership team to ensure that all members of the school community work within a safe and enabling environment.

Four principles underpin this policy, from the moment a student joins either school:

- Every student has the right to feel safe and to be treated with respect, in school, online and on the way to and from school;
- Students who are bullied are listened to, taken seriously and supported;

- Behaviour is communication. We look for the reasons behind bullying and help students who bully to change;
- Staff, students, parents, carers and the children's homes work together to prevent and respond to bullying.

Aims

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

Links to legislation

There are several pieces of legislation which set out measures and actions for school/colleges in response to bullying, as well as criminal and civil law. These may include (but are not limited to):

• The Education and Inspections Act 2006

• The Education Act 2002

• The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014

• The Equality Act 2010

• The Children Act 1989

• Protection from Harassment Act 1997

• The Malicious Communications Act 1988

• Communications Act 2003

• Public Order Act 1986

• Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (statutory guidance)

• Preventing and tackling bullying (DfE advice, July 2017)

What is bullying?

Bullying is defined as the repetitive, intentional harming of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power.

Bullying is, therefore:

- Deliberately hurtful
- Repeated, often over a period of time
- Difficult to defend against

Bullying can include (but is not limited to):

Type of Bullying	Definition
Emotional	Being unfriendly or exclusionary, tormenting. Demanding money, material goods or favours by means of threat.
Physical	Hitting, kicking, pushing, taking another's belongings, any use of violence
Prejudice-based and discriminatory, including: • Racial • Faith-based • Gendered (sexist) • Homophobia/biphobia • Transphobia • Disability-based	Taunts, gestures, graffiti or physical abuse focused on a particular characteristic (e.g. gender, race, sexuality)
Sexual	Explicit sexual remarks, display of sexual material, sexual gestures, unwanted physical attention, comments about sexual reputation or performance, or inappropriate touching
Direct or indirect verbal	Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
Cyber-bullying	Bullying that takes place online, such as through social networking sites, messaging apps or gaming sites

Signs of Bullying

Staff should be vigilant in looking out for signs of bullying or other child protection issues

including:

Physical: unexplained bruises, scratches, cuts, missing belongings, damaged clothes, or schoolwork, loss of appetite, stomach aches, headaches, bedwetting.

Emotional: losing interest in school, being withdrawn or secretive, unusual shows of temper, refusal to say why unhappy, high level of anxiety, mood swings, tearfulness for no reason, lack of confidence, headaches and stomach aches, signs of depression.

Behavioural: sudden changes in behaviour and mood, concentration difficulties, truancy.

Understanding why bullying is occurring

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator/s and victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes

it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online. Other reasons or motivations given for bullying include: bullying related to race, religion or culture; bullying related to special educational needs or disabilities; bullying related to appearance or health conditions; bullying related to sexual orientation; bullying of young carers or looked-after children or otherwise related to home circumstances; sexist or sexual bullying. We carefully review the reasons why bullying is occurring on a case by case basis.

Bullying Prevention

Preventing and raising awareness of bullying is essential in keeping incidents in our school to a minimum. Through assemblies, as well as PSHE lessons, students are given regular opportunities to discuss what bullying is, as well as incidents we would not describe as bullying, such as two friends falling out, or a one-off argument. An annual 'Anti-bullying Week' is held to further raise awareness. E-safety is an important part of the curriculum and information for parents/carers is included in newsletters and on the school's website. Students are taught to tell an adult in school if they are concerned that someone is being bullied.

Preventative Strategies include:

- Using our extensive knowledge of students/learners, and strong relationships with homes, to recognise any changes that might result in 'bullying' behaviours;
- Changes to Individual Management Plans (IMPs);
- An assessment to understand the motivation underpinning the behaviour change;
- Talking to students/learners about issues of difference through dedicated events or projects;
- Talking with students/learners about how to manage their own feelings and emotions;
- Ensuring that all students/learners are appropriately supervised;
- Ensuring that all members of staff are familiar with the policy;
- Watching for early signs of distress and where students/learners are able to communicate, listen to what they are saying;
- Ensuring that appreciation and respect for all cultures are promoted;
- Ensuring that all students/learners have the means to communicate, where verbal communication is challenging;
- Ensuring that teaching students/learners about bullying and its impact is embedded throughout the curriculum offer.
- Ensuring that monitoring and filtering software is effective in protecting students/learners from cyber based bullying

The following steps should be taken when dealing with incidents:

• If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached;

• A clear account of the incident will be recorded on CPOMS the same day, using the bullying category, and shared with the appropriate member of SLT;

• The SLT member will explore the incident with all concerned and keep a record of their findings;

• Information is gathered about the incident before any conclusion is made about whether it was bullying. Both the student suspected of bullying and the student who may have been bullied will be listened to carefully;

• Relevant staff and parents/carers will be kept informed;

• If the issue persists, then further support meetings (with parents and staff) will be held;

• In cases where a crime has been committed or a student is believed to be in immediate danger or at risk, the appropriate authorities (police, local authority) will be informed immediately, before any internal investigation. At this point our safeguarding procedures will be followed;

• If a member of staff is suspected of bullying a student, this is an allegation about an adult. It is reported to the Head Teacher straight away and dealt with under the allegations section of our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (KCSIE 2026, Part four), which includes referral to the LADO. Concerns about the Head Teacher go to the proprietor: Mandy Clarke, Chief Operating Officer (mandy.clarke@newreflexions.co.uk), or Rob Arrowsmith, Director of Education (rob.arrowsmith@newreflexions.co.uk), on 01939 210040;

• If internet/social media based bullying is suspected steps MUST be taken to check if the filtering and monitoring software protection can be improved.

Recording and monitoring

All bullying incidents are recorded on CPOMS under the bullying category, noting the type of bullying (for example prejudice-based, sexual or cyberbullying). The DSL reviews these records each half term to spot patterns, such as the same students, places, times or types of bullying, and acts on what they find. The Head Teacher reports the number and type of incidents, and the action taken, to the proprietor each term.

Bullying outside school and in the children's homes

Where bullying outside school is reported to us, including online, on transport or in the community, we will look into it and act on it. If it could be a crime or poses a serious risk, we will tell the police. Many of our students live in New Reflexions children's homes on our sites. Bullying that happens in a home is shared between the home manager and the DSL so that school and home respond in the same way.

Bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be dealt with immediately.

Students/learners who have been bullied will be supported by:

• Immediate support and reassurance;

• Actions which help to restore self-esteem and confidence;

• Participating in a restorative justice conversation, where appropriate.

Students/learners who have bullied will be helped by:

• Being told in a suitable way that their behaviour is unacceptable and must stop;

• Discovering more about the situation to help restore positive behaviours;

• Informing parents/carers to help change the behaviour of the student;

• Participating in a restorative justice conversation, where appropriate.

We aim to use positive methods to create and restore appropriate behaviours. Action that is solely disciplinary is not considered the right choice within our environment and Positive Behaviour Support ethos.

Remember

- Bullying can have a huge negative impact on children, in the short and long term
- Be on the lookout for signs of bullying, and be aware of who might be more vulnerable
- Report any concerns you have
- Take prejudice-based bullying seriously and listen to children affected by it

Addendum - artificial intelligence (AI) clause:

Generative artificial intelligence (AI)
Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, students and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot and Google Gemini. Microsoft Copilot is the only AI tool approved for use across New Reflexions schools.

We recognise that AI has many uses to help students learn, but it can also 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.

We will treat any use of AI to bully students in line with this policy and our Positive Behaviour Policy. Any AI-generated sexual image of a student is a safeguarding matter and is passed to the DSL straight away.

Useful links and supporting organisations

• Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

• Childline: www.childline.org.uk

• Family Lives: www.familylives.org.uk

• Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk

• MindEd: www.minded.org.uk
• NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk
• The BIG Award: www.bullyinginterventiongroup.co.uk/index.php
• PSHE Association: www.pshe-association.org.uk
• Restorative Justice Council: www.restorativejustice.org.uk
• The Diana Award: www.diana-award.org.uk
• Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk
• Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk
• Young Carers: https://carers.org/about-us/about-young-carers
• The Restorative Justice Council: https://restorativejustice.org.uk/restorative-practice-schools

SEND

• Changing Faces: www.changingfaces.org.uk
• Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk
• DfE: SEND code of practice: www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25

Cyberbullying

• Childnet: www.childnet.com
• Internet Watch Foundation: www.iwf.org.uk
• Think U Know: www.thinkuknow.co.uk
• UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk

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