

Anti-bullying Policy

Colne Valley High School will provide a safe and caring environment. The School recognises that students will learn best in a safe and supportive environment that is free from disruption and in which education is the primary focus. Staff, students and parents have a responsibility to report bullying as soon as possible. They also have a responsibility to implement the preventative strategies outlined in the policy.

This policy outlines how instances of bullying are dealt with, including the procedures to prevent occurrences of bullying.

These strategies, eg learning about tolerance and difference as part of the school's curriculum, aim to promote an inclusive, tolerant and supportive ethos at the school.

Colne Valley High School is aware of the statutory responsibility to discipline students for poor behaviour outside the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives Headteachers the power to discipline students for poor behaviour when they are not on school premises. This can relate to bullying incidents occurring anywhere on or off the school premises.

All staff, parents and students work together to prevent and reduce any instances of bullying at the school. There is a zero-tolerance policy for bullying at the school.

This policy should be used alongside the school's Safeguarding Children Policy as child-on-child abuse must be considered as a potential source of significant harm.

Aims and Values

To involve all members of the school community in countering bullying;

To enable students, staff, parents and governors to understand what constitutes bullying and their specific responsibilities;

To ensure that there are strategies to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse and procedures;

To enable parents to feel confident that bullying will be firmly dealt with by the school;

To inform all members of the school community that bullying behaviour will not be tolerated.

What is bullying?

For the purpose of this policy, "bullying" is defined as persistent behaviour by an individual or group with the intention of verbally, physical, or emotionally harming another person or group. Bullying is generally characterised by:

- **Repetition:** Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over an extended period of time.
- **Intent:** The perpetrator 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 students 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 students may include, but are not limited to:

- Students who are adopted.
- Students suffering from a health problem.
- Students with caring responsibilities.
- Students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Students with certain characteristics are also more likely to be targets of bullying, including, but not limited to:

- Students who are LGBTQ+, or perceived to be LGBTQ+.
- Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) students.
- Students with SEND.

Types of bullying

Many kinds of behaviour can be considered bullying, and bullying can be related to almost anything. Teasing another student because of their appearance, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, home life, culture, or SEND are some of the types of bullying that can occur.

Bullying is acted out through the following mediums:

- Psychological/emotional (being excluded from groups and rumours etc.)
- Cyber (abusive text messages, internet messages etc.)
- Verbal (threats, name calling, racism, homophobia etc.)
- Physical (punching, kicking, scratching, pushing, throwing objects at someone etc.)

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

Homophobic and biphobic 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.

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.

Sexual bullying: Bullying behaviour that has a physical, psychological, verbal or non-verbal sexual dimension or dynamic that subordinates, humiliates or intimidates another person. This is commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes.

Ableist bullying: Bullying behaviour that focusses on another person's disability or support needs; this can include mocking the individual's disability or their needs, using derogatory words or slurs in relation to an individual's disability, or deliberately excluding an individual because of their disability.

Prejudicial bullying: Bullying based on prejudices directed towards specific characteristics or experiences, e.g. religion or mental health issues.

Relational bullying: Bullying that primarily constitutes of excluding, isolating and ostracising someone – usually through verbal and emotional bullying.

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.

Bullying invariably undermines self-confidence and initiative and can create a cycle of poor performance and further criticism, potentially causing depression, stress, mental or physical ill-health, with consequent absence from school or work.

Some forms of bullying may break the law and may be reported to the police by the school:

- Violence or assault;
- Theft;
- Repeated harassment or intimidation, e.g. name calling, threats and abusive phone calls, emails or text messages, sexual harassment and peer on peer abuse;
- Hate crimes – any incident which the victim, or anyone else, thinks is based on someone's prejudice towards them because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or because they are transgender.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for:

- Evaluating and reviewing this policy to ensure that it does not discriminate against any students on the basis of their protected characteristics or backgrounds.
- The overall implementation and monitoring of this policy.
- Ensuring that all governors are appropriately trained regarding safeguarding and child protection at induction.
- Ensuring that the school adopts a tolerant and open-minded policy towards difference.
- Ensuring the school is inclusive.
- Analysing any bullying data to establish patterns and reviewing this policy in light of these.
- Ensuring the DSL has the appropriate status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the role.
- Appointing a safeguarding link governor who will work with the DSL to ensure the policies and practices relating to safeguarding, including the prevention of cyberbullying, are being implemented effectively.
- Ensuring that students are taught how to keep themselves and others safe, including online.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Reviewing and amending this policy, accounting for new legislation and government guidance, and using staff experience of dealing with bullying incidents in previous years to improve procedures.
- Keeping a Bullying Report Form of all reported incidents, including which type of bullying has occurred, to allow for proper analysis of the data collected.
- Analysing the data in the bullying record at termly intervals to identify trends, so that appropriate measures to tackle them can be implemented.

- Arranging appropriate training for staff members.

Pastoral staff are responsible for:

- Corresponding and meeting with parents where necessary.
- Providing a point of contact for students and parents when more serious bullying incidents occur.

Teachers are responsible for:

- Being alert to social dynamics in their class.
- Being available for students who wish to report bullying.
- Providing follow-up support after bullying incidents.
- Being alert to possible bullying situations, particularly exclusion from friendship groups, and informing the student's Achievement Coordinators of such observations.
- Refraining from stereotyping when dealing with bullying.
- Understanding the composition of student groups, showing sensitivity to those who have been the victims of bullying.
- Reporting any instances of bullying once they have been approached by a student for support.

Parents are responsible for:

- Informing their child's Achievement Coordinator or form tutor if they have any concerns that their child is the victim of bullying or involving in bullying in anyway.
- Being watchful of their child's behaviour, attitude and characteristics and informing the relevant staff members of any changes.

Students are responsible for:

- 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 students in incidents.
- Keeping evidence of cyberbullying and informing a member of staff should they fall victim to cyberbullying.

Prevention

All members of the school will be made aware of this policy and their responsibilities in relation to it. All staff members will receive training on identifying and dealing with different types of bullying.

Preventing bullying behaviours can be possible through a range of proactive measures. At Colne Valley High School, we look for every opportunity to prevent bullying type behaviours from happening. Some of the actions the school takes to prevent bullying include:

- The issue of bullying is included in the curriculum and classwork e.g. Drama, English
- Bullying is addressed through the PSHE programme as well as the RSE and health education curriculum, in line with the Secondary Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy will explore and discuss issues at age-appropriate stages such as:
 - Healthy and respectful relationships.
 - Boundaries and consent.
 - Stereotyping, prejudice and equality.

- Body confidence and self-esteem.
 - How to recognise abusive relationships and coercive control.
 - Harmful sexual behaviour, the concepts involved and why they are always unacceptable, and the laws relating to it.
- The Form Time and Assembly programmes reinforce British Values and the ethos of the school.
 - Anti-bullying week is dedicated to raising awareness of bullying and reminding staff and students of their responsibilities to report it.
 - Students are not permitted to use their mobile phones around the school. This is partly to prevent cyber-bullying.
 - Duty staff have been trained to be vigilant and to watch and listen for any bullying type behaviours, no matter how small.
 - Duty points have been carefully considered to ensure there are no 'dead spaces' where bullying can take place undisturbed.
 - Seating plans in lessons are carefully considered using any relevant information about the relationships between specific pupils.
 - External speakers raise awareness of issues such as racism and homophobia. Posters around the school emphasise the importance of diversity in the school community.
 - Working with the wider community such as the police/children's services where bullying is particularly serious or persistent to send a strong message that bullying is unacceptable within our school.
 - A safe place (Hub), supervised by a teacher, will be available for students to go to during free time if they feel threatened or wish to be alone. The teacher supervising the area will speak to students to find out the cause of any problems and, ultimately, stop any form of bullying taking place.
 - Students deemed vulnerable, will meet with their form tutor on a monthly basis, where appropriate, to ensure any problems can be actioned quickly. Form tutors will also offer an 'open door' policy allowing students to discuss any bullying, whether they are victims or have witnessed an incident.
 - Before a new student joins the school, particularly when this happens in-year, the student's form tutor and the DSL will implement a strategy to prevent bullying from happening – this will include students feeling confident in identifying and reporting alleged bullying behaviours. Vulnerable students may be attached to friendship groups to establish positive peer relationships and identify named members of staff as their key worker. Where a new student is deemed vulnerable, this strategy may involve further observation or intervention on the part of the DSL.
 - The school will be alert to, and address, any mental health and wellbeing issues amongst students, as these can be a cause, or a result, of bullying behaviour.
 - The school will ensure potential perpetrators are given support as required, so their educational, emotional and social development is not negatively influenced by outside factors, e.g. mental health issues.

Colne Valley High School recognises that specific groups of students are particularly vulnerable to bullying. These include children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), young carers, Black and Minority Ethnic (BME), those who are, or thought to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersexual, asexual or pansexual (LGBTQ+). As such, prevention of bullying considers the specific patterns of discrimination these groups face.

Signs of bullying

Staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a student is a victim of bullying:

- Being frightened to travel to or from school
- Unwillingness to attend school
- Repeated or persistent absence from school
- Becoming anxious or lacking confidence
- Saying that they feel ill repeatedly
- Decreased involvement in school work
- Leaving school with torn clothes or damaged possessions
- Missing possessions
- Missing dinner money
- Asking for extra money or stealing
- Cuts or bruises
- Lack of appetite
- Unwillingness to use the internet or mobile devices
- Lack of eye contact
- Becoming short tempered
- Change in behaviour and attitude at home

Although the signs outlined above may not be due to bullying, they may be due to deeper social, emotional or mental health issues, so are still worth investigating. Students who display a significant number of these signs will be approached by a member of staff to determine the underlying issues causing this behaviour.

Staff will be aware of the potential factors that may indicate a student 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 abuse
- Their academic performance has started to fall and they are showing signs of stress

If staff become aware of any factors that could lead to bullying behaviours, they will notify the student's form tutor or Achievement Coordinator, who will investigate the matter and monitor the situation.

Child-on-child abuse

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

To prevent child-on-child abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, the school will educate students about abuse, its forms, and the importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others through the curriculum, assemblies and PSHE lessons, in line with the Prevention section of this policy.

All staff will:

- Be aware that students of any age and gender are capable of abusing their peers.
- Be aware that abuse can occur inside and outside of school settings.
- Be aware of the scale of harassment or abuse, and that just because it is not being reported does not mean it is not happening.
- Take all instances of child-on-child abuse equally seriously regardless of the characteristics of the perpetrators or victims.
- Never tolerate abuse as “banter” or “part of growing up”, and will never justify sexual harassment, e.g. as “boys being boys”, as this can foster a culture of unacceptable behaviours and one that risks normalising abuse.
- Be aware that child-on-child abuse can be manifested in many ways, including sexting, sexual harassment and assault, and hazing or initiation-type violence.
- Always challenge any harmful physical behaviour that is sexual in nature, such as inappropriate touching. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

Sexual harassment in particular can take many forms, including but not limited to:

- Telling sexual stories, making sexual remarks, or calling someone sexualised names.
- Sexual “jokes” or taunting.
- Deliberately brushing against someone.
- Displaying images or video of a sexual nature.
- Upskirting (this is a criminal offence).
- Online sexual harassment, e.g. creating or sharing sexual imagery, sexual comments on social media, or sexual coercion or threats.

Students 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 student has been harmed, is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral may be made to children’s social care services (CSCS) and potentially the police, where the DSL deems this appropriate in the circumstances.

All staff will be aware and sensitive towards the fact that students may not be ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused. Students being abused may feel embarrassed, humiliated, scared, or threatened.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can take many forms and can go even further than face-to-face bullying by invading personal space and home life, and can target more than one person. It can also take place across age groups and target students, staff and others, and may take place inside school, within the wider community, at home or when travelling. It can sometimes draw bystanders into being accessories.

Cyberbullying can include the following:

- Threatening, intimidating or upsetting text messages
- Threatening or embarrassing pictures and video clips
- Disclosure of private sexual photographs or videos with the intent to cause distress
- Silent or abusive phone calls
- Using the victim’s phone to harass others, to make them think the victim is responsible
- Threatening or bullying emails, possibly sent using a pseudonym or someone else’s name

- Menacing or upsetting responses to someone in a chatroom
- Unpleasant messages sent via instant messaging
- Unpleasant or defamatory information posted to blogs, personal websites and social networking sites, e.g. Instagram

NB. The above list is not exhaustive, and cyberbullying may take other forms.

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to cyberbullying. The school views cyberbullying with the same severity as any other form of bullying and will follow the sanctions set out in this policy if they become aware of any incidents.

All members of staff will receive training on an annual basis on the signs of cyberbullying, in order to identify students who may be experiencing issues and intervene effectively.

Many of the signs of cyberbullying will be similar to those found in the 'Signs of bullying' section of this policy; however, staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a student is being cyberbullied:

- Avoiding use of the computer
- Being on their phone routinely
- Becoming agitated when receiving calls or text messages

Staff will also be alert to the following signs which may indicate that a student is cyberbullying others:

- Avoiding using the computer or turning off the screen when someone is near
- Acting in a secretive manner when using the computer or mobile phone
- Spending excessive amounts of time on the computer or mobile phone
- Becoming upset or angry when the computer or mobile phone is taken away

Parents will also be invited to attend annual training sessions in order to educate them on the signs and symptoms of cyberbullying, and will be advised to report to the Headteacher if their child displays any of the signs outlined in this section.

During times when remote education is being utilised, the school will frequently be in contact with parents to make them aware of their activities online, but also to reinforce the importance of students staying safe online, and explaining how filtering and monitoring procedures work.

Staff will be aware that a cyberbullying incident might include features different to other forms of bullying, prompting a particular response. Significant differences may include the following:

- **Possible extensive scale and scope** – students may be bullied on multiple platforms and using multiple different methods that are made possible by virtue of the bullying taking place online
- **The anytime and anywhere nature of cyberbullying** – students may not have an escape from the torment when they are at home due to the bullying continuing through technology at all times
- **The person being bullied might not know who the perpetrator is** – it is easy for individuals to remain anonymous online and on social media, and students may be bullied by someone who is concealing their own identity

- **The perpetrator might not realise that their actions are bullying** – sometimes, the culture of social media, and the inability to see the impact that words are having on someone, may lead to students crossing boundaries without realising
- **The victim of the bullying may have evidence of what has happened** – students may have taken screenshots of bullying, or there may be a digital footprint that can identify the perpetrator

The school will support students who have been victims of cyberbullying by holding formal and informal discussions with the student about their feelings and whether the bullying has stopped.

In accordance with the Education Act 2011, the school has the right to examine and delete files from students' personal devices, e.g. mobile phones, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone. In these cases, the school's Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy will be followed at all times.

Procedures

Minor incidents will be reported to the victim's form tutor, who will investigate the incident, set appropriate sanctions for the perpetrator, and inform the Achievement Coordinator in writing of the incident and outcome.

When investigating a bullying incident, the following procedures will be adopted:

- The victim, alleged perpetrator and witnesses are all interviewed separately
- Members of staff ensure that there is no possibility of contact between students being interviewed, including electronic communication
- If a student is injured, members of staff take the student immediately to the school nurse for a medical opinion on the extent of their injuries
- A room is used that allows for privacy during interviews
- A witness is used for serious incidents
- If appropriate, the alleged perpetrator, the victim and witnesses are asked to write down details of the incident; this may need prompting with questions from the member of staff to obtain the full picture
- The Headteacher/DSL will gather evidence of a cyberbullying incident; this may involve text messages, emails, photos, etc. provided by the victim
- 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 nonconfrontational and not assigning blame until the investigation is complete
- All students involved are informed that they must not discuss the interview with other students

Due to the potential for some specific forms of 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.

Sanctions

If the Headteacher is satisfied that bullying did take place, the perpetrator will be helped to understand the consequences of their actions and warned that there must be no further incidents.

The Headteacher will inform the perpetrator of the type of sanction to be used in this instance, e.g. detentions or service based activities, and future sanctions if the bullying continues.

If possible, the Headteacher will attempt reconciliation and will obtain an apology from the perpetrator. This will either be in writing to the victim, and/or witnesses if appropriate, or face-to-face, but only with the victim's full consent.

Discretion will be used here; victims will never feel pressured into a face-to face meeting with the perpetrator.

Parents are informed of bullying incidents and what action is being taken.

All staff involved in managing instances of bullying will be aware that taking disciplinary action and providing support are not mutually exclusive actions, and should be conducted simultaneously to encourage more positive behaviour in future.

The school will avoid unnecessarily criminalising students for bullying or abusive behaviour where possible, as young people with criminal records face stigma and discrimination in future aspects of their lives. The school's focus when handling perpetrators will be supporting them to develop more positive behaviours and to refrain from abusive and bullying behaviours in the future.

The Achievement Coordinator informally monitors the students involved over the next half term.

The school will remain cognisant of the fact that continued access to school can be important for rehabilitation of harmful behaviour, and will not exclude students unless as a last resort – where there have been serious or consistent incidents of bullying, the school will act in line with the Suspension and Exclusion Policy.

Support

In the event of bullying, victims will be offered the following support:

- Emotional support and reassurance from the school counsellor
- Reassurance that it was right to report the incident and that appropriate action will be taken
- Liaison with their parents to ensure a continuous dialogue of support
- Advice not to retaliate or reply, but to keep the evidence and show or give it to their parent or a member of staff
- Advice on aspects of online safety, in the event of cyberbullying, to prevent re-occurrence, including, where appropriate, discussion with their parents to evaluate their online habits and age-appropriate advice on how the perpetrator might be blocked online
- Discussion with their parent on whether police action is required (except in serious cases of child exploitation or abuse where the police may be contacted without discussion with parents)

The Headteacher/DSL will carefully consider in each instance of bullying that is handled whether it is to split up the victim(s) and perpetrator(s), e.g. preventing them sharing classes or spaces where possible, and will split up other harmful group dynamics to prevent further occurrences where necessary.

Victims will be encouraged to broaden their friendship groups by joining lunchtime or after-school clubs or activities.

Staff, particularly the DSL, will work with the victim to build resilience, e.g. by offering emotional therapy.

The school will acknowledge that bullying may be an indication of underlying mental health issues. Perpetrators will be required to attend a mandatory counselling session to assist with any underlying mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. The school will work with the perpetrator regarding any underlying mental health or emotional wellbeing problems.

Follow up support

The progress of both the perpetrator and the victim will be monitored by their form tutors. One-on-one sessions to discuss how the victim and perpetrator are progressing may be appropriate. If appropriate, follow-up correspondence will be arranged with parents one month after the incident.

Students who have been bullied will be offered continuous support. The DSL will hold a formal meeting, on a monthly basis, to check whether the bullying has stopped – these formal meetings will continue to take place once a month until the Achievement Coordinator and victim are confident the bullying has stopped. The victim will be encouraged to tell a trusted adult in school if bullying is repeated.

Students who have bullied others will be supported in the following ways:

- Receiving a consequence for their actions
- Being able to discuss what happened
- Being helped to reflect on why they became involved
- Being helped to understand what they did wrong and why they need to change their behaviour
- Appropriate assistance from parents

Students who have been bullied will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and the DSL will, if necessary, refer the victim of bullying to CAMHS.

In cases where the effects of bullying are so severe that the student cannot successfully reintegrate back into the school, the Headteacher and DSL will look to transfer the student to another mainstream school with the consent and involvement of the student's parents.

Where a student who has been the victim of bullying has developed such complex needs that alternative provision is required, the student, their parents, the Headteacher and DSL will meet to discuss the use of alternative provision.

Bullying outside school

Staff will remain aware that bullying can happen both in and outside of school, and will ensure that they understand how to respond to reports of bullying that occurred outside school in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The Headteacher has a specific statutory power to discipline students 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 students' 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 students for misbehaving outside of the school premises. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, e.g. 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 misbehaviour or bullying, members of staff can only discipline the student on school premises, or elsewhere when the student 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 of the action taken against a student. If the misbehaviour could be of a criminal nature, or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police will be informed.

Record keeping

The DSL will ensure that robust records are kept with regard to all reported or otherwise uncovered incidents of bullying – this includes recording where decisions have been made, e.g. sanctions, support, escalation of a situation and resolutions.

The Headteacher and DSL will ensure that all decisions and actions recorded are reviewed on a regular basis for the purposes of:

- Identifying patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour on the part of certain students that may need to be handled, e.g. with pastoral support.
- Reflecting on whether cases could have been handled better and using these reflections to inform future practice.
- Considering whether there are wider cultural issues at play within the school, e.g. whether school culture facilitates discriminatory bullying by not adequately addressing instances, and planning to mitigate this.
- Considering whether prevention strategies could be strengthened based on any patterns in the cases that arise.
- Responding to any complaints about how cases have been handled.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Anti-Bullying surveys are taken every term in Year 7 to 11.
- This anti-bullying policy is the Governors' responsibility, and they review its effectiveness.
- The Academy will monitor bullying incidents including; racist/homophobic/transphobic bullying, or bullying directed at children with disabilities or special educational needs.
- This policy will be reviewed annually in accordance with the Academy's review cycle or earlier if necessary.

Useful websites to help

- [childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk) – contains tips and resources for victims
- [bullying.co.uk](https://www.bullying.co.uk) – help and advice for victims, parents and schools
- [nspcc.org.uk](https://www.nspcc.org.uk) – help and advice for parents and families