Highfield Middle School

Anti-Bullying Policy

Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead: Richard Oades

Deputy Safeguarding Leads: Caroline Gibbs & Laura Hook

Anti-Bullying Lead: Teresa Hetherington

Named Governor with Lead Responsibility: Lynn Liss

1. Introduction and Statement of Intent

Highfield Middle School is committed to providing a safe, supportive, and caring environment where all pupils are free from fear and intimidation. We believe that every member of our school community has the right to be treated with dignity and respect and we will respond promptly and effectively to reported incidents of bullying.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All staff, pupils, parents, and carers share responsibility for preventing and addressing bullying.

Through this policy, we aim to:

- Promote positive behaviour and mutual respect.
- Prevent bullying wherever possible.
- Support pupils who experience bullying.
- Address bullying behaviour firmly and fairly.
- Work in partnership with parents and external agencies.

2. Definition of Bullying

Highfield Middle School has worked closely with the Anti Bullying Alliance, achieving one of their highly respected Anti-Bullying awards, and they define bullying as:

"The repetitive, intentional physical or emotional hurting of one person or a group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face to face or online".

Bullying may be:

- **Physical** – hitting, pushing, jostling, assault.
- **Verbal** – name-calling, teasing, threats, insults.
- **Emotional/Psychological** – exclusion, intimidation, spreading rumours.
- **Cyberbullying** – using digital technologies to harass, threaten, humiliate, or embarrass others.

Bullying can occur face-to-face, online, in school, on journeys to and from school, or during school activities.

3. Types and Characteristics of Bullying

Bullying behaviour may include:

- Intimidation and extortion
- Racist, sexist, homophobic, biphobic, or transphobic abuse
- Sexual bullying
- Targeting of vulnerable pupils
- Group or "gang" bullying

The actions of bullies may aim to:

- Exert power over others
- Frighten or humiliate victims
- Create a climate of fear
- Encourage secrecy and group pressure

Victims may experience anxiety, isolation, low self-esteem, and difficulties with learning and attendance.

4. School Ethos and Prevention

Highfield Middle School adopts a whole-school approach to preventing bullying. We promote a culture where kindness, inclusion, and respect are central to school life. We believe that preventing bullying is the responsibility of our whole school community and when there are incidents of bullying we will work together to deal with the situation and to learn from what has happened. In our school we will prevent bullying by:

- Promoting good discipline and positive behaviour.
- Encouraging respectful relationships between pupils and staff.
- Delivering anti-bullying education through Citizenship, assemblies, and curriculum activities.
- Encouraging pupils to become “upstanders” rather than bystanders.
- Training staff to recognise early signs of bullying.
- Providing additional supervision in high-risk areas.
- Supporting vulnerable pupils.
- Maintaining clear behaviour expectations.

We encourage all pupils to speak out and reassure them that reporting bullying is not “snitching” but a responsible action.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Treat others with respect.
- Report bullying to a trusted adult.
- Support peers who may be experiencing bullying.
- Follow the school behaviour policy.

Staff

All staff will:

- Be familiar with this policy.
- Act promptly on reports of bullying.
- Record and investigate incidents.
- Provide support to victims.
- Apply appropriate sanctions.
- Monitor pupils’ wellbeing.

Senior Leaders

Senior Leaders will:

- Coordinate investigations.
- Liaise with parents.
- Monitor patterns and trends.
- Ensure consistency in response.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are encouraged to:

- Report concerns promptly.
- Work in partnership with the school.
- Support school actions.
- Avoid confronting other pupils directly.

6. Reporting Bullying

We will thoroughly investigate reports made by anyone, including the child or young person being bullied, another pupil, a family member, or a staff member. In our school, pupils are encouraged to talk to staff when they are unhappy or have concerns. Pupils in our school understand that they have a right to feel and be safe and a responsibility to support others to feel and be safe.

Bullying can be reported by:

- The victim
- A witness
- A parent or carer
- A member of staff

Reports may be made to:

- Class teacher
- Form tutor
- Year Leader
- Any trusted adult
- School office

All reports will be taken seriously and treated sensitively.

Parents who believe their child is being bullied should contact the school immediately.

7. Responding to Bullying Incidents

All reported cases will be recorded, investigated, and addressed promptly. We are committed to taking all reports of bullying seriously. When pupils report their concerns, our staff are trained to LISTEN and to BELIEVE.

The school will follow these steps:

1. Ensure all pupils involved are safe.
2. Listen carefully to all parties.
3. Investigate the incident fully.
4. Decide whether bullying has occurred.
5. Provide support to the victim.
6. Address the behaviour of the perpetrator.
7. Apply appropriate sanctions.
8. Inform parents where appropriate.
9. Monitor the situation.

Victims will be reassured that they are safe and supported. Perpetrators will be helped to understand the impact of their actions and supported to change their behaviour.

Restorative approaches may be used where appropriate.

8. Sanctions and Support

Support for victims

We aim to offer a proactive, sympathetic and supportive response to the victims of bullying; the support provided in each case will be assessed on an individual basis. The exact nature of the response will be determined by the pupil's individual need and may include:

- Regular check-ins
- Pastoral support
- Counselling referrals
- Peer support
- Safe spaces

Sanctions for Bullies

Sanctions will be in line with the Behaviour Policy and may include:

- Warnings
- Loss of privileges
- Detentions
- Behaviour contracts
- Internal exclusion
- Fixed-term suspension
- Permanent exclusion (in extreme cases)

Serious incidents may be referred to external agencies, including the police.

9. Cyberbullying

The school recognises the growing impact of cyberbullying and will:

- Educate pupils on online safety.
- Encourage reporting of online abuse.
- Investigate incidents involving digital platforms.
- Work with parents and external agencies.
- Apply sanctions where appropriate.

Under the Education Act 2011, school staff may examine electronic devices where there is reasonable cause to believe online bullying has taken place, in line with legal guidance.

10. Safeguarding

Where bullying raises concerns about a child's safety or welfare, it will be treated as a safeguarding issue.

Staff will:

- Consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Follow safeguarding procedures.
- Refer to external agencies when necessary.

11. Monitoring and Evaluation

All bullying incidents will be recorded and monitored.

Senior leaders will:

- Analyse records regularly.
- Identify patterns or trends.
- Review the effectiveness of interventions.
- Adapt strategies where necessary.

Pupil feedback, surveys, and School Council discussions can be used to inform future practice.

12. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if required.

Reviewed and updated	September 2026
Next review date	September 2028