



Anti-Bullying Policy for Laurus Trust Secondaries

Date of Review: June 2026

Date of Next Review: September 2027

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Statement of Intent

The staff, parents, and students of all Laurus Schools work together, to create a happy, caring, and safe learning environment. In the event of a bullying allegation or observation, whether verbal, physical or indirect, this will be investigated. It is everyone's responsibility to try to prevent occurrences of bullying and to deal with any incidents quickly, effectively, and sensitively.

Roles and Responsibilities

- The Head of School has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Anti-Bullying Policy.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) oversees bullying concerns that may be safeguarding related.
- Pastoral Staff will investigate and respond to reports of bullying incidents.
- All staff have a duty to respond to, record, and report bullying concerns.
- Governors monitor the effectiveness of the policy and ensure statutory duties are met.

Definition of Bullying

The Anti-bullying Alliance (ABA) defines bullying as: 'the **repetitive, intentional hurting** of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an **imbalance of power**. It can happen face to face or online.' As a trust we also recognise numerous, separate incidents of bullying behaviour towards different individuals or groups can constitute bullying.

Not all incidents of unkind or harmful behaviour, constitute bullying. However, all such behaviour will be addressed appropriately in line with the school's behaviour and safeguarding policies.

Types of Bullying Behaviour

As categorised by the ABA, bullying behaviours can be:

- Physical – pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching, fighting, stealing, damaging belongings, intimidating behaviours.
- Verbal - name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling.
- Emotional – isolating others, tormenting, spreading rumours, hiding possessions, threatening gestures, ridiculing, humiliation, intimidation, excluding, manipulation, and coercion.

- Sexual – unwelcome looks or comments about appearance, unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, pressure to act promiscuously or to act in a way that makes others feel uncomfortable, abusive comments (including online), homo/bi/transphobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films etc.
- Online/Cyber – posting on social media, sharing photos, sending nasty text messages, social exclusion
- Indirect - can include the exploitation of individuals.

Bullying can be motivated by prejudice against groups, actual differences between students, or perceived differences for example:

- Age
- Disability or SEND need
- Gender Reassignment or Identity
- Marriage or Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy or Maternity
- Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Cared for, Adopted or Carer
- Other circumstances

Most of which are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, and it is unlawful to discriminate against anyone on these grounds.

Impact of Bullying

Bullying can have a wide range of effects on everyone involved, it can lead to low self-esteem, depression and self-exclusion, and research suggests the negative social, physical, and mental health effects can still be evident in adulthood (Takizawa et al., 2014). Students who bully others may themselves be experiencing bullying, unmet needs, or other difficulties, which should be considered as part of the school's response.

Under the Children Act of 1989, a bullying incident must be addressed as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

Bullying Prevention

Prevention is the most effective way to address bullying and takes place through a whole-school approach:

- Challenge: challenge assumptions and recognise bias.

- Be open-minded: listen to new ideas and learn from others.
- Collaborate: involve the whole school community and support one another.
- Share: share successes and challenges to strengthen practice.
- Invest time: recognise that change takes time, reflection, and learning.

Across all year groups, students are taught about difference and appropriate behaviour to embed Laurus Trust Qualities, Attitude and Habits including kindness, bravery, citizenship, curiosity, gratitude, and integrity. Respect for others, understanding of the value of education and recognising how our actions affect others and permeate the whole school environment.

Preventative action is embedded through the personal development curriculum, including:

- Promoting a climate and ethos that values individuals and encourages self-discipline and mutual respect.
- Anti-bullying education through the curriculum, assemblies, and form time.
- Teaching about diversity, values, and respect, including through ICT schemes of work.
- The ICT Acceptable Use policy
- Peer support programmes
- Staff training on all aspects of anti-bullying, including racist and homophobic language.
- Celebrating diversity through displays, resources, and national events.
- Primary school liaison work
- Monitoring and evaluation of the current policy

The Anti-Bullying Policy is available on website and in school. Parents and carers are encouraged to discuss issues with their children.

Bullying Incidents

Racial Bullying or Harassment

Racial bullying will not be tolerated. Any incidents, including racist language, threats of physical abuse, or racist materials, will be fully investigated. Sanctions will be applied as appropriate.

Sexual and Sexual-Orientation-Based Bullying

Sexual bullying affects all genders and may include abusive name-calling, comments about appearance or puberty, inappropriate and uninvited touching, sexual harassment, or, in extreme cases, sexual assault.

Sexual bullying may also be linked to sexual orientation. Students do not need to identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or trans to experience such bullying.

Any allegation of sexual assault will be referred to the police and/or appropriate external agencies in line with safeguarding procedures and statutory guidance, alongside the application of the school's Behaviour policy.

Strategies to address sexual bullying include:

- Recording all incidents on CPOMS and reviewing in line with Hackett's Harmful Sexual Behaviour Continuum (Hackett, 2010).
- Staff awareness that homophobic and sexist bullying can occur.
- Challenging inappropriate language and supporting students to understand its impact.
- Exploring sexism and sexual bullying through Personal Development lessons and the Relationships curriculum.
- Appropriate supervision of the school site.
- Use of sanctions and restorative measures where appropriate.
- Age-appropriate discussion of relationships and consent.

Bullying Involving Students with SEND

Students with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities may be at increased risk of bullying and may find it more difficult to articulate their experiences. All such incidents will be investigated fully, recorded on CPOMS, and shared with parents and carers.

Individual circumstances and needs will be considered, including making reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010 to ensure students with SEND are supported appropriately. Social stories or other tailored interventions may be used where helpful.

Bullying Off School Premises

While incidents that occur outside school are not always within the school's direct control, the school recognises that off-site bullying can have a significant impact on students' wellbeing and school life. Where incidents involve students from the school and impact behaviour or safety within school, they

will be investigated and addressed in line with this policy.

Where possible, the school will support students who have been bullied on their way to or from school. Actions may include:

The following steps may be taken:

- Speaking with the students involved and their parents or carers.
- Liaising with other schools where relevant.
- Contacting the police regarding local community concerns.
- Provide guidance to students on how to avoid or respond to bullying situations.

Online / Cyber-bullying

The Malicious Communications Act (1988) states that it is an offence to send electronic communications intended to cause distress or anxiety, or which are grossly offensive, threatening or knowingly false.

The rapid development and, widespread access, to technology has increased the potential reach and impact of cyber bullying. Prevention is addressed through the Online Safety and Personal Development curriculum. Where necessary, the school may seek support from external organisations.

Under the Education Act (2011), staff may search electronic devices and delete inappropriate material where they have reasonable grounds to do so. If the school has reason to suspect that electronic devices contain harmful material, searches may be conducted in line with statutory guidance.

Strategy for Dealing with Bullying

All reports of bullying are taken seriously, followed up, and recorded. If, through investigation, the school believes that bullying has occurred, actions may include education, restorative work and, where appropriate, sanctions in line with the Behaviour Policy. Suspension or permanent exclusion may be considered where appropriate.

Support for Students Who Experience Bullying

The school is committed to providing timely, appropriate, and ongoing support to students who experience bullying. Students will be listened to, reassured, and supported, including through pastoral intervention, access to a trusted adult, reasonable adjustments and referral to additional services where needed.

Parents and carers will be kept informed and involved. All incidents are monitored as part of the

school's framework to ensure students feel safe, secure, and valued.

Intervention for Students Who Display Bullying Behaviour

The school recognises that students who bully others may be experiencing their own difficulties. While bullying behaviour is unacceptable and will be addressed with appropriate sanctions, the school also has a duty to explore how they are feeling, what led to the behaviour, and what needs to change, through education and supporting students through restorative and reflective approaches. This may include helping students understand the impact of their behaviour, take responsibility, repair harm, and develop positive relationships.

Students with SEND may require additional support or reasonable adjustments to meet expectations.

Reporting

All members of the school community are encouraged to report bullying.

Students can report concerns to any trusted adult, key pastoral staff, or via the school's anonymous online reporting system.

Parents and carers can report concerns in person, by phone, or by email using contact details on the school website.

All reports are investigated promptly and recorded on CPOMS. Students and parents will be kept informed of outcomes and next steps where appropriate.

Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed annually by senior leaders and governors. Records of bullying incidents, student voice and parental feedback are used to evaluate effectiveness and inform improvement.

References

- *Anti-Bullying Alliance (2022). Reporting and Recording Bullying in Schools.*
- *gov.uk (1988). Malicious Communications Act 1988. [online] Legislation.gov.uk. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/27/section/1>.*
- *Hackett, S., (2010) Children, young people and sexual violence. In Barter, C and Berridge, D (eds) Children behaving badly? exploring peer violence between children and young people. London: Blackwell Wiley.*
- *Legislation.gov.uk. (2012). Education Act 2011. [online] Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/21/section/2>.*
- *Takizawa, R., Maughan, B. & Arseneault, L. (2014). Adult health outcomes of childhood bullying victimisation. American Journal of Psychiatry*

Equality Impact Statement

Names and title of people involved with this assessment	Rachel Robinson Assistant Trust Director of Inclusion
Impact assessment carried out with regard to identified characteristics	☒ Race ☒ Disability ☒ Sex ☒ Age ☒ Religious belief ☒ Sexual Orientation ☒ Gender Reassignment
Summary of any issue/proposed changes	UPDATE TO WHOLE POLICY, implementing changes to KCSIE 2026 and language
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Laurus Trust
Woods Lane
Cheadle Hulme
Cheshire
SK8 7JY

t: 0161 549 7000
e: enquiries@laurustrust.co.uk
w: laurustrust.co.uk