



# **ALTRINCHAM PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

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**This policy applies to Altrincham Preparatory School, including the EYFS. This policy is available upon request to parents and prospective parents and is published to parents and prospective parents on the School's website.**



## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY 2025-26**

**This policy applies to all pupils in the School, including those in EYFS.**

### **STATEMENT OF INTENT**

At Altrincham Preparatory School (APS), our community is based upon respect, good manners and fair play. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so that every one of our pupils can reach his full potential. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed, but orderly, atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other.

Altrincham Preparatory School prides itself on its respect for others and mutual tolerance. Parents/Guardians have an important role in supporting Altrincham Preparatory School in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that School and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together. Acceptance of this policy forms part of our standard terms and conditions.

Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the School. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable and we acknowledge the seriousness of bullying in causing psychological damage and even suicide (although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour).

### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The aims of this policy are two-fold:

- i) The prevention of bullying at APS
- ii) The handling of any case of bullying that might arise

i) Prevention: our policy tries to allow pupils to feel confident:

- to report bullying
- that incidents of bullying will be dealt with fairly

ii) Handling of incidents: the School endeavours to:

- provide support for both the 'victim' and the 'bully' as well as their families
- ensure that due process is followed and written records are kept
- apply appropriate sanctions in order to discourage boys being unpleasant to one another and to improve interpersonal behaviour

## DEFINITION OF BULLYING

### What is Bullying?

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

Put another way, bullying is the intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another person. It may take many forms, including physical (including any threat of or use of violence of any kind), sexual, verbal (including cyber-bullying via email, social media, gaming, and SMS or other instant messages), and emotional (including by excluding, being sarcastic, name-calling, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone, or actions that fall short of direct participation, where someone encourages others to bully, or joins in with laughing at a victim. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidating, and often involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim whether that be a physical, psychological or intellectual imbalance, or by the perpetrator having the capacity to socially isolate the victim.

Bullying is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, and may involve actions or comments regarding a person's race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special education needs or disabilities (SEND), or because of a pupil's familial circumstances, such as they are adopted, in care or that they have caring responsibilities. Bullying may be motivated by actual differences between pupils, or perceived differences.

Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time and can involve anyone - pupils, other young people, staff and parents.

## THE SCHOOL'S RESPONSE TO BULLYING

At Altrincham Preparatory School, we always treat bullying very seriously. It conflicts sharply with the School's social and moral principles, and potentially with its policy on equal opportunities, and will not be tolerated. When incidents of bullying do occur, they are dealt with quickly and taken seriously. The School will never dismiss bullying as banter or horseplay, and all reported incidents of bullying will be dealt with by staff in accordance with this policy.

Altrincham Preparatory School understands that bullying can be so serious that it may cause physical, emotional and psychological damage, such as eating disorders, self-harm and even suicide. Stopping violence and ensuring the immediate physical safety of pupils is the School's first priority, however, the School acknowledges that emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical bullying, and therefore staff will use their discretion when dealing with an incident of bullying within the parameters of this policy and the School's Positive Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy.

Whilst bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment, sexual violence and assault, upskirting and to violent and threatening behaviour. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying: everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are victims of

bullying will be supported. Pupils who have engaged in bullying behaviour will be subject to appropriate disciplinary sanction and will also be supported in learning different ways of behaving.

Bullying which occurs on School trips or outside of the School's premises will not be tolerated any more than bullying on School premises. Teachers will, where appropriate, discipline pupils for misbehaviour outside School premises and outside School hours.

### SIGNS OF BULLYING

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to return to School
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing, or are damaged
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary)
- Diminished levels of self confidence
- Frequent visits to the Office with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- Choosing the company of adults
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping, experiences nightmares
- Talking of suicide or running away

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers and reported and recorded, as appropriate, in accordance with this policy.

### PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

The School's response to bullying does not start at the point in which a pupil has been bullied. We take the following preventative measures in order to create an environment that prevents bullying from becoming a problem at the School in the first place:

#### Pupils

- The School promotes an ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat each other with respect at all times, inside and outside of School;
- All new pupils (including EYFS pupils) are briefed thoroughly on the School's expected standards of behaviour. They are told what to do if they encounter bullying. We guarantee that those who report bullying in good faith will not be punished and will be supported;
- We use appropriate assemblies to explain the School's policy on bullying. Our PSHE programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the School. The programme is structured to enforce messages about community involvement

and taking care of each other. It focuses on the importance of equality and diversity and pupils are encouraged to avoid prejudicial and exclusionary language;

- Other lessons highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by developing social skills and by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable;
- All of our pupils are encouraged to tell any member of staff at once if they are being bullied, or if they know or suspect that bullying is taking place;
- The School buildings display advice on where pupils can seek help, including details of confidential help lines and websites where they can connect with external specialists, such as ChildLine, Kidscape, Bullying UK, and the Samaritans;
- The School does not tolerate peer-group "initiation ceremonies" or hazing rituals designed to cause pain, anxiety or humiliation to pupils, and all staff remain alert to such actions.

### Staff

- Upon induction, all new members of staff are given training and guidance on the School's Anti-Bullying Policy and on how to react to, and record allegations of bullying at the School. The School will ensure that all School staff understand the principles of the School's policy, the School's legal responsibilities, actions to be taken to resolve and prevent incidents of bullying from arising or escalating and also details of sources of further support;
- The School recognises that certain pupils may be more at risk of bullying than others, and may require additional support when dealing with an incident of bullying, for example pupils with SEND and LGBT pupils. The School will ensure that staff receive appropriate training to be able to understand the specific needs of our pupils, and to enable all staff to provide an inclusive environment for all pupils;
- All reported incidents are recorded on CPOMS and investigated as soon as possible, and within in 48 hours. We always monitor reported incidents. Records of any incidents are kept securely in order that patterns of behaviour can be identified and monitored;
- We have a strong and experienced pastoral team of class teachers who support the Headmaster and Deputy Head. They are knowledgeable in handling any incidents as an immediate priority, and who are alert to possible signs of bullying;
- Our Leadership Team gives support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both victims and bullies.
- Staff (including Lunchtime Supervisor Assistants) are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class and patrol the School site. They are trained to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour at all times;
- The School has the right, and duty, to investigate incidents of bullying involving our pupils which take place outside School hours, on School visits and trips, or that otherwise occur outside of School. The School has the right to take disciplinary measures in respect of such incidents. Disciplinary measures will be taken in accordance with the School's Behaviour Management Policy and will be applied in a fair, consistent and reasonable manner, taking into account the needs of SEND and vulnerable pupils; and
- Staff will always consider the motive behind bullying behaviour and whether it raises any concerns for the welfare of the perpetrator. If staff reasonably suspect that a pupil may be suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, they should follow the procedures set out in the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and discuss their concerns with the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) without delay.

## Parents

- This policy is readily available on the School's website and in hard copy on request/ for reading at (which parents are made aware of) so that they are clear on the School's approach to bullying and what to do if their child experiences bullying;
- We encourage close contact between all School staff and parents, and will always make contact if we are worried about a pupil's well-being;
- If parents know or suspect that their child, or another pupil, is being bullied, they should contact the School without delay. All concerns will be taken seriously;
- We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures and all other aspects and implementation of this Anti-Bullying policy.

## PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH REPORTED BULLYING

The School ensures that all instances of, or concerns about bullying and cyber-bullying, both on and away from School premises are easy to report and that they are recorded properly. Records of instances of bullying and allegations of bullying will be kept on CPOMS. Records will also be kept on CPOMS relating to safeguarding where appropriate, in order to enable the School to identify patterns of behaviour and to evaluate the effectiveness of this Anti-Bullying policy.

The School recognises that pupils are likely to report bullying to someone they trust: this could be any member of staff. All staff will be trained in handling an allegation, and will be aware that they must listen to the pupil, not ask leading questions and make a written record of the allegation to the best of their ability.

If an incident of bullying is reported, the following procedure will be adopted:

- The member of staff to whom the incident was reported, or who first discovers the situation, will share the information with the Deputy Head and will reassure and support the pupils involved, without promising absolute confidentiality;
- The Deputy Head will inform the class teacher about the bullying allegation as soon as possible;
- The victim and the alleged perpetrator/s will each be interviewed individually member of s=teaching staff on his own (or, if appropriate, with a suitable person present for support) and asked to write their account of events;
- Where the Deputy Head considers that the reported bullying behaviour may be criminal, or considers that there may be a risk of harm to someone, the Case Handler will discuss this with the Headmaster in the first instance, and will report the matter to the Police without delay if considered necessary;
- The incident/s should be recorded on CPOMS .

- The victim will be interviewed again at a later stage by a member of the Leadership Team, separately from the alleged perpetrator(s). He will be offered support to develop a strategy to help him. It will be made clear to him why revenge or retaliation is inappropriate;
- The perpetrator(s) will be interviewed again at a later stage by a member of the Leadership Team, separately from the victim, and it will be made clear why his behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. He will be offered guidance on modifying his behaviour. The School's Behaviour Management Policy may also be invoked. Sanctions under the Behaviour Management Policy might include, for example, detention and withdrawal of privileges. The School may exclude a boy, either temporarily or permanently, in cases of serious or persistent bullying, or in the event that the support put in place for the perpetrator(s) does not result in the modification of behaviour to an acceptable level.
- The parents/ guardians of all parties will be informed and may be invited into School to discuss the matter, and the appropriate sanctions under the Behaviour Management Policy. The parents' support will be sought in respect of preventative measures, and any concerns of either party will be addressed.
- A way forward, including any disciplinary sanctions and support for the perpetrator(s), should be determined, and agreed and shared with all parties. This should recognise that suitable support may be needed by the pupils who are being bullied, and also by the pupils who bully others, as well as dealing with disciplinary measures in accordance with the School's Behaviour Management Policy;
- As part of this process, a meeting involving all the parties, with close staff supervision, may be convened to help develop a strategy which enables all concerned to close the episode;
- A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place and put on record;
- In very serious cases, and only after the Headmaster has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police, in many cases it will be possible to resolve such issues internally under this policy and the School's Behaviour Management Policy.

### CYBER-BULLYING

Cyber-bullying can be defined as:

*"The use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others." (Belsey, <http://www.cyber-bullying.org/>)*

It is an aggressive, intentional act often carried out repeatedly over time, and often against a victim who cannot easily defend himself/ herself. The School acknowledges that cyber-bullying may take place inside School, outside of School and at any time of the day.

Cyber-bullying could involve communications by various electronic media, including for example:

- Texts, instant messages or calls on mobile phones;
- The use of mobile phone camera images to cause distress, fear or humiliation;
- Posting threatening, abusive, sexual, discriminatory, offensive or humiliating material or comments on websites (including blogs, personal websites and social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or YouTube);

- Using e-mail to message others in a threatening or abusive manner; or
- Hijacking/ cloning e-mail accounts.

The School acknowledges that cyber-bullying may take many different forms including: cyber-stalking, exclusion or peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorised publication of private information or images, encouraging derogative comments on online platforms, upskirting and sexting.

The School has a role to play in teaching pupils about the underpinning knowledge and behaviours that can help them to navigate the online world safely and confidently regardless of the device, platform or app. In taking this forward, the School has regard to the DfE's non-statutory guidance on Teaching online safety in School (updated June 2019).

### Prevention of cyber-bullying

For the prevention of cyber-bullying, in addition to the measures described above, the School:

- Expects all boys to adhere to its e-Safety Policy and ICT Acceptable Use Policy for Pupils. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our IT Department monitors pupils' use;
- May impose disciplinary sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse, of the internet in accordance with the Behaviour Management Policy;
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyber-bullying in PSHE lessons, which covers blocking, removing contacts from "friend" lists and sharing their personal data;
- Ensures the boys are aware of the various forms in which cyber-bullying can take place, that it can have severe and distressing consequences, and that participation in cyber-bullying will not be tolerated;
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details private and secure;
- Does not allow the use of pupils' mobile phones in School;

### Procedures for dealing with cyber-bullying

The School will follow the procedures set out in this policy and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for incidents of cyber-bullying, taking such disciplinary action that is considered reasonable in the circumstances, with a view to regulating pupil conduct and protecting the reputation of the School, and the welfare of its pupils.

Although cyber-bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws that may apply to communications of a harassing or threatening manner or the unauthorised publication of private images, upskirting and sexting. Where the School considers that a reported incident of cyber-bullying may amount to a criminal offence, it will inform the Police.

### Electronic devices

In response to an allegation of cyber-bullying, certain staff are permitted to conduct a search for electronic devices, such as a pupil's mobile phone, with the authority of the Headmaster. Staff do not require the consent of the pupil, or their parents to undertake a search, provided they have reasonable

grounds for suspecting that the pupil is in possession of a prohibited item, and provided they have the Headmaster's prior consent to undertake a search.

The search will be conducted in accordance with the procedure set out in the Behaviour Management Policy. Where a search finds an electronic device that is prohibited by the School rules, or where the member of staff undertaking the search reasonably suspects that the electronic device has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence or cause personal injury or damage to property, the School may examine any data or files on the device, where there is good reason to do so, for example, where there has been an allegation of cyber-bullying. Parental consent to search through electronic devices is not required.

The School may also erase any data or files from the device if the School considers there to be good reason to do so, unless there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the device may contain evidence in relation to a criminal offence, where the files should not be deleted and the device must be given to the Police without delay.

If, following a search, the member of staff determines that the device does not contain any evidence in relation to an offence, or are advised by the Police following a report to them that they will not take any further action to investigate an alleged offence, the School can decide whether it is appropriate to delete any files or data from the device, and may retain the device as evidence of a breach of this policy and the School's Positive Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy.

The School may then take steps to punish the student in accordance with the Positive Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy, where appropriate. In the event that the search highlights a safeguarding concern in respect of any pupil, the School will follow the procedures set out in the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The School will keep a record of all searches carried out, including the results of any search, and the actions taken following that search.

Reference should be made to Pupils' Use of ICT and the Online Safety Policy.

#### EYFS PUPILS

The youngest pupils at Altrincham Preparatory School are also encouraged to behave towards each other with kindness and consideration. They are encouraged to learn to look after their own possessions and to respect others' possessions. We expect them to be honest, helpful and polite, and to work hard and to listen to others. They should respect everyone and learn to value differences and diversity.

We explain to our EYFS pupils why some forms of behaviour are unacceptable and hurtful to others. We rarely need to impose sanctions in the EYFS setting; but sometimes we may remove a privilege for hurtful behaviour.

Occasionally, a pupil may be sent to see the Deputy head or Headmaster who will explain the inappropriateness of a particular action and introduce a more appropriate action; but such instances are rare. Parents are always informed when any sanction or reproof is needed towards their child, and in cases of repeated instances of hurtful or inappropriate behaviour, parents will be invited into the School to discuss the situation with the child's teacher and the Deputy Head or Headmaster, to agree a joint way of handling the difficulty.

Copies of our Positive Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy, including EYFS pupils, can be found on the School website.

### COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Parents and pupils are encouraged to use our Complaints Procedure (which is published on our website) if they feel that any concerns about bullying (or anything else) are not being addressed properly. Parents of EYFS pupils should be aware that they have the right to refer a complaint directly to Ofsted, if they are unhappy with the way in which their complaint has been handled (the Complaints Procedure explains how to complain to Ofsted).

### RELATED POLICIES:

Positive Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy

Disability, Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Learning Support Policy

Equal Opportunities policy

EYFS Policy

ICT Policy

PSHE Policy

Pupil Use of ICT, Mobile Phones and Other Electronic Equipment Safeguarding policy

### REVIEW:

Incidents of Bullying are reported on a termly basis to the Governing Board and recorded formally in Minutes.

## **Appendix 1**

### Key Sources of Information

Bullying and victimisation in Schools are high profile issues, which have the potential to inflict serious harm upon a School's reputation. The Government together with not-for-profit organisations have expended considerable resources in trying to help Schools to tackle this problem by offering advice, guidance and training to Schools. A number of useful guidance notes, reference points, as well as guidance produced by the Department of Education (DfE) are listed below.

A Legal Requirement, an ISI Reporting Standard and OFSTED Standards for Boarding Schools and EYFS providers.

References and guidance:

- A. "Preventing and Tackling Bullying", DfE, July 2017
- B. ISI Inspection Framework, September 2019
- C. The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework 2017
- D. Bullying UK: Cyber-bullying
- E. "Cyber-bullying: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff", November 2014
- F. "Cyber-bullying Guidance: Understand, Prevent and Respond" - Childnet International
- G. "Searching, screening and confiscation", DfE, January 2018
- H. "Teaching Online Safety in School", DfE, June 2019

### REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

All independent Schools: Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Paragraph 10 of Schedule 1 -the proprietor must ensure 'that bullying at the School is prevented in so far as reasonably practicable, by the drawing up and implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy.'

### Legislation

Schools' duty to promote good behaviour (Education and Inspections Act 2006 Section 89) Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010

Power to tackle poor behaviour outside School (Education and Inspections Act 2006 Section 89(5)) The Equality Act 2010

### Anti-Bullying Organisations

The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA): founded in 2002 by NSPCC and National Pupils's Bureau to bring together over 100 organisations into one network to develop and share good practice across the whole range of bullying issues.

<http://www.antibullying.net/adultsinSchools.htm>

<http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>

Beatbullying: a charity with an emphasis on working directly with pupils and young people. In addition to lesson plans and resources for parents, Beatbullying have developed the Cybermentors peer support programme for young people affected by cyberbullying.

<http://www.beatbullying.org>

Kidscape: advice for young people, professionals and parents about different types of bullying and how to tackle it. They also offer training and support for School staff, and assertiveness training for young people.

[www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

Restorative Justice Council.

<http://www.restorativejustice.org.uk/>

### Cyberbullying

ChildNet International: Specialist resources for young people to raise awareness of online safety and how to protect themselves:

Bullying Online [www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)

Cyberbullying <http://www.cyberbullying.org/>

Childnet International <http://www.childnet-int.org/>

UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) Advice on Child Internet Safety 1.0

### Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender

EACH <http://eachaction.org.uk/>

Schools Out [www.Schools-out.org.uk](http://www.Schools-out.org.uk)

Stonewall <http://www.stonewall.org.uk/>

### Special Educational Needs and Disability

Mencap <http://www.mencap.org.uk>

Changing Faces Changing Faces: Provide online resources and training to Schools on bullying because of physical difference.