

Senior School Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Action	Policy to be reviewed annually		
	Committee	**Date**	**Completed**
Reviewed	Senior Deputy Head	August 2026	✓
Reported	Safeguarding Steering	November 2026	✓
Approved	Board of Governors	December 2026	
Next review	Senior Deputy Head	August 2027	

Anti-Bullying Policy

Gresham's School is dedicated to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils.

It is our wish at Gresham's to develop the full potential of each and every pupil. For this to be possible, everyone has to live in an environment where they can feel safe and happy. Clearly this places a responsibility on every member of the community.

The School recognises the particular impact that bullying can have on boarders. Unlike day pupils, boarders may not be able to remove themselves from difficult relationships at the end of the school day and may share living and social spaces with those involved. Bullying within a boarding environment can therefore have a significant impact on a pupil's sense of safety and wellbeing.

In accordance with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools, the School takes a proactive approach to preventing bullying and ensures that boarders have accessible and effective ways to raise concerns. Boarding staff are expected to be alert to changes in relationships and group dynamics, particularly in less structured times and spaces, and to respond promptly to concerns.

Boarders are regularly reminded of the adults and other appropriate sources of support available to them. Any concerns about bullying within the boarding community will be taken seriously and addressed in accordance with this policy and, where appropriate, the School's safeguarding procedures.

The School recognises that the absence of reports does not necessarily mean that bullying or child-on-child abuse is not occurring. Staff are therefore expected to remain professionally curious and alert to changes in behaviour, relationships and group dynamics.

All forms of bullying are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Bullying may constitute child-on-child abuse and will always be taken seriously. All staff and pupils must recognise that abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up".

Aims and objectives

Gresham's is committed to creating an open and secure environment for all pupils where unkindness, bullying and child-on-child abuse has no place. We expect all members of our community to adhere to this policy and promote an anti-bullying culture throughout the School.

Scope of this policy

This policy applies to all pupils at Gresham's School, and their interactions with others in any form, whether during term time or the holidays, on or offline. This policy has regard for the Department for Education 'Preventing & Tackling Bullying' (July 2017) and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2026) and should be read in conjunction with the **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**

Definitions

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. It often involves an imbalance of power.

A single incident may not meet the usual definition of bullying but may nevertheless constitute child-on-child abuse or another serious breach of the School's Behaviour Policy and will be responded to accordingly.

There are many types of bullying:

Physical: hitting, kicking, touching without consent

Verbal: name-calling, insulting, making offensive remarks, spreading rumours, teasing, 'banter'.

Indirect: being unfriendly, excluding, damaging property, online activities such as posting pictures without consent.

Prejudice based: taunts, comments, gestures, unwanted touching

Bullying may be motivated by prejudice or discrimination relating to a pupil's identity, background, characteristics or individual circumstances. This may include, but is not limited to, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability or special educational needs.

The School will not tolerate discriminatory or prejudice-based bullying and will have regard to its duties under the Equality Act 2010 when preventing and responding to such behaviour. The School also recognises that pupils may be targeted because of characteristics or circumstances which are not specifically protected under the Equality Act.

Hazing (also known as initiation or rituals): includes activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group. That group could be a boarding house or year group. The outcome can be that pupils feel unsafe or vulnerable at school and/or in their boarding house, particularly overnight. Although not always the case, younger pupils are often the target.

Cyber-Bullying

Cyber-bullying can be an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual using any electronic form of contact against a victim who cannot easily defend themselves. However, pupils are aware that considerable emotional hurt can be caused to a victim through thoughtless and careless use of social media. The perpetrator may not have intended to cause hurt but will be held responsible for improper and inconsiderate use of social media. Cyber-bullying may occur in or out of school and at all times of the day. Pupils should see the School's separate Online Safety Policy and ICT Acceptable Use Agreement.

Cyber-bullying can take many forms including:

- Threats and intimidation
- Harassment or stalking
- Repeatedly sending unwanted messages or making phone calls
- Using public forums to harass or post derogatory or defamatory statements
- Posting personal information about someone online without their permission
- Exclusion such as setting up a closed group or blocking someone from joining
- Hacking
- Creation or sharing of manipulated images or videos
- AI-generated or altered images

- Deepfakes
- Impersonation/fake accounts
- Non-consensual sharing of intimate images where relevant.

Cyber bullying can potentially have far greater impact because of a number of factors, including:

- Invasion of personal space and the sense that the victim cannot ‘get away from it’.
- Initial anonymity of those taking part in the bullying behaviour
- The ability to broadcast rapidly to a potentially huge audience and to continue to do so repeatedly over a long period of time
- Other pupils who would not normally take part in bullying behaviour may be drawn in as accessories

Procedure for dealing with reports of bullying

- Cases of bullying or suspected bullying that are observed or reported to any member of staff are communicated immediately via CPOMS using the ‘unkindness/bullying’ category which will immediately alert the house pastoral team, Senior Deputy Head and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- The Housemaster/mistress will discuss the next steps with the Senior Deputy Head or DSL.
- The DSL and Senior Deputy Head will consider whether prejudice or discrimination has been a factor and will take account of the individual needs and vulnerabilities of all pupils involved
- The DSL and Senior Deputy Head will monitor both victim and perpetrator(s) from a safeguarding point of view and keep the appropriate records. Bullying may constitute child-on-child abuse and must always be considered within the School's safeguarding framework. Staff must be alert to the possibility that behaviour initially reported as bullying may indicate wider safeguarding concerns.
- The HSM will record the details of the incident, investigation and follow-up on CPOMS. If there is more than one perpetrator across multiple houses it may be agreed that the Deputy Head (Pastoral) will lead the investigation.
- The member of staff who reported the incident will be kept informed of progress, with information that is appropriate to share.
- The School policy will then be followed.
- Parents/guardians of pupils involved will normally be informed of the incident by the relevant Housemaster/mistress and, where appropriate, the Senior Deputy Head. Where there is a safeguarding reason not to inform a parent/guardian, this will be discussed with the DSL.
- The Deputy Head (Pastoral) or the DSL will decide upon an appropriate course of action, which will include help, support and counselling to the victim(s) and the same for those responsible for the bullying behaviour. Disciplinary action may also be taken against the perpetrator(s).

We support the victim(s) by:

- Offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about the experience with someone they trust and giving advice and support.
- Offering the support of our SANDI clinic or Mental Health Nursing team
- Informing the victim's parents/guardians.
- Monitoring the situation and offering continuing support. Where there is an identified ongoing risk to a pupil's safety or wellbeing, an individual risk assessment and/or support plan may be put in place.

The primary aim of the School's response is to ensure that the bullying stops, that the pupil who has experienced it is supported, and that those responsible understand the impact of their behaviour. Appropriate disciplinary action may also be necessary

The list below is not exhaustive but is a guide to the School's likely actions in response to bullying.

- Talk about what happened to discover why they became involved.
- Inform the parents/guardians of those responsible for the bullying behaviour.
- Continue to work with those responsible for the bullying behaviour in order to get rid of prejudiced attitudes as far as possible.
- Where appropriate, with careful consideration of each case, with the relevant staff present and with the consent of both parties, it can be a positive outcome for the victim(s) and the party responsible for the bullying behaviour to meet, to allow the victim(s) to explain the impact of the bullying behaviour on them. A restorative meeting will never be used where it would place the pupil who has experienced bullying under pressure, cause further distress, or create an inappropriate expectation of reconciliation or forgiveness.
- Take disciplinary action to prevent more bullying.

Disciplinary Actions

The School will determine the appropriate response according to the seriousness, persistence, context and impact of the behaviour. It is not necessary for actions or sanctions to be applied sequentially. The Head reserves the right to go to permanent exclusion straight away.

- Verbal warning
- The parents/guardians of those responsible for bullying behaviour will be informed.
- Gating or a Deputy Head's detention
- Suspension
- Expulsion

Bullying, which happens outside of the School, may be subject to School discipline if the welfare of other pupils or the culture or reputation of the school are placed at risk. Disciplinary actions "may, to some extent as is reasonable, include measures to be taken with a view to regulating the conduct of pupils at a time when they are not on the premises of the School and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of staff at school" [Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Section 89(5)]

Strategy to prevent bullying

Prevention

The School's response to bullying starts before any incident has occurred. By using CPOMS to gather information about issues between pupils, weekly Housemaster/mistress meetings and staff briefings we can proactively put strategies in place to try to prevent bullying occurring.

Where staff feel that conflict or lack of understanding may occur, pupils and staff are educated via Chapel talks, assemblies or tutor sessions to help create a culture of understanding and acceptance. Assemblies and tutor sessions are very flexible and can be adapted at no notice to respond to any issue. Staff and pupils are expected to treat each other with respect and therefore this culture extends to the classroom, the dining room, the grounds, and the boarding houses.

Parents are reminded of the School's policy in annual letters from the Senior Deputy Head.

Reporting bullying

The School aims to make it easy and safe for any pupil or member of staff to report bullying.

On every pupil's intranet dashboard is a "Help" button which automatically sends an email to The DSL (copied to all Deputy DSLs) who will get back to them discreetly as soon as possible.

Pupils are regularly reminded of all the other staff and senior pupils whom they can turn to for help.

Parents who are concerned about their child or any child should inform the School immediately.

The training of staff

Staff are trained in anti-bullying procedures in various ways:

- New members of staff are fully briefed in the induction process by the Director of Pastoral Care and/or the Deputy Head (Pastoral)
- Tutors and matrons are fully briefed by Housemaster/mistresses about any social issues amongst pupils and how to deal with them in their House in Tutor Meetings, and at duty handovers where appropriate. Close liaison with their Housemaster/mistress on pupil welfare is regular.
- Briefings with key teaching staff are held to give updates about the behaviour or vulnerability of certain pupils or groups of pupils, and how staff should respond to them.
- INSET sessions in School and CPD out of School
- Trained to be alert to the particular vulnerability of SEND and LGBT+ pupils to bullying
- National Anti-Bullying Week provokes dialogue amongst staff and pupils
- Talks in Chapel given by staff, pupils and visiting speakers
- Annual bullying survey results are analysed and shared with key staff by the Senior Deputy Head.

The training of pupils

From November 2022 the School has introduced anti-bullying pupil ambassadors. The group is led by the Head of PSHE and Wellbeing who regularly reports to the Senior Deputy Head and/or the DSL with any concerns or ideas raised by the pupils. The group aim to have a profile which promotes inclusivity, kindness and being upstanders in the community. They promote anti-bullying in the school through Chapel talks, events and house-based activities, working alongside the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion committee.

Record keeping and monitoring

The Senior Deputy Head and DSL monitor all reports of bullying and on a termly basis shares this information with the Deputy DSLs and Housemasters/mistresses so that patterns across houses, year groups, boarders or protected characteristics can be identified. Housemaster/mistresses will also review specific incidents with the Senior Deputy Head or DSL.

All staff are expected to log concerns about pupils on CPOMS.

Through the audit of the termly bullying logs, the annual bullying survey and regular reporting on CPOMS, the Senior Deputy Head and the wider pastoral team are able to monitor the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy. The Anti-bullying ambassadors assist in the review of this policy.