



Adventure Wellbeing School

Anti-bullying Policy

Policy Document	Anti-bullying Policy
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Statement of Intent

At Adventure Wellbeing School, we are dedicated to providing a caring, inclusive, and safe environment where every pupil, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), can learn and grow without fear of bullying. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in our school. We recognise the particular vulnerabilities that SEND pupils may face and are committed to offering additional protections and support. When bullying occurs, all pupils should feel empowered to report it, knowing that incidents will be handled promptly, effectively, and with their well-being in mind. The entire school community—staff, pupils, and parents—must work together to maintain a culture of respect, safety, and inclusion.

Introduction

Bullying can have serious consequences on children’s emotional, social, and academic development. These effects can be even more profound for SEND pupils, who may face additional challenges or difficulties in communicating their distress. Adventure Wellbeing School acknowledges these vulnerabilities and takes proactive steps to prevent bullying, address incidents, and provide long-term support for victims and bullies alike. Our proactive approach instils confidence in our community that we are actively working to create a safe and nurturing environment for all.

Our policy aligns with the latest **Department for Education (DfE)** guidance, including:

- **Preventing and Tackling Bullying (July 2017)**
- **Supporting Children and Young People Who Are Bullied (2014)**
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)**
- **Equality Act 2010** requires schools to prevent discrimination and promote equality for all pupils, particularly those with SEND.
- **The Independent School Standards (2014)** mandate that independent schools have effective strategies to promote good behaviour and prevent bullying.

By aligning with these regulations, Adventure Wellbeing School ensures that our anti-bullying policy is not only fully compliant with legal requirements but also reflects best practices for supporting SEND pupils. This alignment provides a sense of security and confidence in our policies and procedures.

Our Obligations

In developing a comprehensive approach to bullying, Adventure Wellbeing School takes into consideration the following obligations from government guidance, the Independent School Standards, and SEND-specific legislation:

- **The Equality Act 2010:** This act prohibits discrimination based on protected characteristics, including disability, race, sex, and sexual orientation. For SEND pupils, this legislation mandates reasonable adjustments to ensure that they are not unfairly disadvantaged in school, which includes safeguarding them from bullying.
- **The Children and Families Act 2014:** This act emphasises the duty to provide appropriate support to children with SEND, recognising that they may be more vulnerable to bullying due to difficulties in communication, social interactions, or physical differences.

- **DfE Guidance on Independent Schools:** Independent schools must meet specific behavioural and anti-bullying standards. These include implementing policies that actively prevent bullying and supporting victims and perpetrators. Failure to meet these standards can affect the school's registration with the Department for Education.
- **Ofsted Guidelines:** Schools are expected to have robust policies to safeguard pupils, particularly vulnerable pupils such as those with SEND. Ofsted inspections consider the school's ability to prevent bullying, promote well-being, and ensure equality of opportunity for all.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is defined as intentional, repeated behaviour that uses power to harm another person either physically or emotionally. For SEND pupils, bullying may manifest differently and can have more severe effects due to their potential challenges in social understanding, communication, and physical differences.

Typical forms of bullying include:

- **Emotional Bullying:** Exclusion, spreading rumours, name-calling, or manipulating relationships to cause emotional distress.
- **Physical Bullying:** Hitting, pushing, kicking, or other forms of physical harm. This can be incredibly distressing for pupils with physical disabilities who may be unable to defend themselves.
- **Racist Bullying:** Bullying that targets a person's race, ethnicity, or cultural background. Racial slurs, graffiti, and exclusion based on race are examples.
- **Sexual Bullying:** Unwanted physical contact, sexually abusive comments, or behaviour that demeans someone based on gender or sexuality.
- **Homophobic, Biphobic, or Transphobic (HBT) Bullying:** Bullying based on sexual orientation or gender identity, including derogatory comments or exclusion because of perceived or actual LGBT+ status.
- **Verbal Bullying:** This includes name-calling, teasing, or derogatory comments undermining an individual's self-worth. For SEND pupils, this may involve mocking their disabilities or challenges.
- **Cyberbullying:** The misuse of digital platforms, such as social media, text messaging, or email, to harass, threaten, or demean others. SEND pupils may be particularly vulnerable to cyberbullying if they rely heavily on online spaces for social interaction.

Recognising Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

Recognising the signs of bullying is crucial for timely intervention. SEND pupils may not always communicate their distress verbally or may struggle to realise that they are being bullied. Therefore, staff must remain vigilant and observant. Common signs include:

- **Emotional Symptoms:** Sudden anxiety, mood swings, withdrawal from social situations, loss of self-confidence, or unexpected sadness.
- **Physical Symptoms:** Unexplained injuries, frequent headaches or stomach aches, sleep disturbances, or refusal to attend school.
- **Behavioural Changes:** Reluctance to participate in certain activities, avoiding specific areas of the school (e.g., playground, hallways), becoming clingy or overly reliant on adults, or sudden changes in friendships.

SEND pupils may also exhibit behaviours such as avoiding group work or expressing fear of social settings, which may indicate bullying. Even if subtle, these signs should be thoroughly investigated to ensure pupil safety.

Why Addressing Bullying is Crucial for SEND Pupils

The impact of bullying on pupils with SEND can be particularly damaging, both in the short and long term. Children with SEND are more likely to experience bullying due to perceived differences in behaviour, learning, or physical ability. Additionally, SEND pupils may face difficulties in self-advocacy, making it more challenging for them to report bullying or seek help.

Bullying Effects on SEND Pupils:

- **Mental Health:** Bullying can contribute to anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and social isolation, which are already challenges for some SEND pupils.
- **Academic Impact:** Persistent bullying can result in school avoidance, poor academic performance, and disengagement from learning.
- **Social and Emotional Development:** Bullying can hinder the development of social skills, particularly in pupils with communication difficulties or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), where peer interactions may already be challenging.

For these reasons, it is essential that the school take a firm stance on bullying and provide a strong support network to prevent and address incidents.

Responsibilities of Staff, Pupils, and Parents

Adventure Wellbeing School believes that bullying prevention and management are collective responsibilities that require the participation of the entire school community.

- **Staff Responsibilities:**
 - **Training:** All staff must receive regular training on recognising the signs of bullying, particularly among SEND pupils, who may display less apparent indicators of distress.
 - **Prompt Action:** Staff must respond to all reported bullying incidents promptly and follow school procedures for investigation and intervention.
 - **Pupil Support:** Teachers, support staff, and counsellors must provide ongoing emotional and psychological support to both the victim and the perpetrator, ensuring they understand the impact of bullying and promoting positive behavioural changes.
 - **Collaboration with Parents:** Staff must communicate effectively with the parents of both the victim and the bully, engaging them in resolving incidents and fostering a cooperative approach to behavioural improvement.
- **Pupil Responsibilities:**
 - **Awareness and Understanding:** Pupils must be educated on what constitutes bullying, its effects on others, and why it is never acceptable.
 - **Reporting:** Pupils are encouraged to report bullying involving themselves or their peers to a trusted adult. SEND pupils may be supported using accessible communication methods (e.g., symbols, visual aids) to express their concerns.
- **Parent Responsibilities:**
 - **Monitoring:** Parents should monitor for signs of bullying, such as changes in their child's behaviour or reluctance to attend school, and promptly communicate any concerns to the school.
 - **Supporting the School:** Parents must collaborate with the school in addressing bullying incidents and reinforcing the message that bullying is unacceptable both in and out of school.

Procedures for Reporting and Investigating Bullying

Adventure Wellbeing School has established a clear and accessible process for reporting, investigating, and addressing bullying incidents. Our procedures are designed to support all pupils, especially those with SEND, and ensure that the school remains a safe and inclusive environment.

1. **Reporting:** Any member of the school community (pupil, parent, or staff) can report bullying incidents directly to staff, Children's Champions, or the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). SEND pupils can report incidents through alternative communication methods, such as visual cards, symbols, or trusted intermediaries (e.g., a support worker).
2. **Recording:** All bullying incidents must be documented, including details of the nature of the bullying, the individuals involved, and any immediate actions taken. Documentation may include additional information on communication methods used during the investigation for SEND pupils.
3. **Parent Involvement:** The parents of both the victim and the bully will be notified promptly and invited to a meeting to discuss the incident, its impact on their child, and the steps that will be taken to address the situation.
4. **Investigation:** The SLT will thoroughly investigate all reported bullying incidents. Investigations will be handled with sensitivity, considering the SEND pupils' specific needs. In some cases, input from SEND specialists or external agencies may be required.
5. **Resolution:** A tailored intervention plan will be developed for the victim and the bully. This plan may include restorative practices, counselling, assertiveness training, or behavioural contracts. In line with the school's behaviour policy, more formal disciplinary measures such as suspension or exclusion may be considered for persistent or severe cases.

Consequences and Support for Bullying Incidents

Adventure Wellbeing School follows a graduated approach to consequences, balancing discipline with restorative practices. The goal is to help bullies understand the harm caused and to ensure that victims receive adequate support to recover from the experience.

- **Consequences for Bullies:**
 - **Apology and Reconciliation:** The bully may be asked to sincerely apologise to the victim, facilitated by a staff member or counsellor.

- **Restorative Practices:** Bullies may participate in restorative justice programs where they reflect on their behaviour and work towards making amends.
 - **Behaviour Contracts:** Bullies may be required to sign a behaviour contract outlining specific actions to avoid future incidents.
 - **Counselling and Support:** The school may recommend counselling or behavioural support programs in cases where the bullying is rooted in emotional or social difficulties.
- **Support for Victims:**
 - **Emotional Support:** Victims of bullying will receive counselling or support from mentors to rebuild their confidence and self-esteem.
 - **Monitoring:** After an incident has been addressed, staff will continue to monitor the situation to prevent recurrence and ensure the victim feels safe.
 - **Involvement of External Agencies:** Where necessary, the school may involve external agencies such as social services, mental health professionals, or the police.

Preventative Strategies

At Adventure Wellbeing School, we believe that prevention is the most effective approach to addressing bullying. We have implemented several key strategies to reduce the likelihood of bullying and promote a positive school culture:

- **Creating a Safe and Inclusive Environment:** We work hard to create a positive school culture that emphasises kindness, respect, and empathy. Assemblies, classroom discussions, and peer support initiatives all contribute to this goal.
- **Staff Training:** All staff receive ongoing training to recognise the signs of bullying, particularly among SEND pupils, and to intervene effectively. This includes training on de-escalation techniques, supporting vulnerable pupils, and promoting positive behaviour.
- **Anti-Bullying Education:** We integrate anti-bullying education into our curriculum, including PSHE (Personal, Social, Health, and Economic) education, ICT (focusing on cyberbullying), and other subject areas. These lessons teach pupils about the impact of bullying and how to develop empathy and respect for others.
- **Peer Support Programs:** Peer mentoring and buddy systems encourage older or more experienced pupils to support younger or more vulnerable pupils, particularly those with SEND.
- **Promoting Digital Citizenship:** With the rise of cyberbullying, we actively teach pupils about safe and responsible use of digital technologies. This includes lessons on online safety, digital respect, and reporting inappropriate behaviour.

Addressing Bullying Outside of School Premises

Adventure Wellbeing School acknowledges that bullying can occur beyond the school's physical boundaries, particularly in the form of **cyberbullying**. Incidents that occur off-site but impact the school environment or a pupil's well-being will be taken seriously.

- **Off-Site Bullying:** Staff may address bullying outside school premises (e.g., on public transport, in local areas, or online) if it affects pupils' safety or learning. Adventure Wellbeing School works closely with parents, external agencies, and local authorities to address off-site bullying.
- **Cyberbullying:** Cyberbullying can have significant impacts, especially on vulnerable pupils who may rely heavily on digital platforms for communication. The school will intervene in cases of online bullying and educate pupils on safe and respectful online behaviour. Parents will be advised to monitor their children's online activities to prevent or address cyberbullying.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Policy Review

To ensure the effectiveness of our anti-bullying efforts, Adventure Wellbeing School regularly monitors, evaluates, and reviews this policy. Key aspects include:

- **Incident Monitoring:** The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) tracks all reported bullying incidents and their outcomes to identify patterns and ensure that interventions work.
- **Feedback from Stakeholders:** The school seeks feedback from pupils, staff, and parents to assess the school's environment and anti-bullying measures. This feedback is invaluable in helping the school adapt and improve its policies and practices.

- **Regular Policy Review:** The anti-bullying policy is reviewed annually in accordance with the latest **government guidance**, including updates to the Equality Act, SEND legislation and the Independent School Standards. The school also ensures that its practices comply with guidance from Ofsted and the Department for Education.

Evaluation of Policy Success

The success of Adventure Wellbeing School's anti-bullying policy will be measured through:

- **Reduction in Bullying Incidents:** A noticeable decrease in reported bullying incidents indicates that preventative strategies are effective.
- **Pupil Well-Being:** Increased pupil confidence in reporting bullying and positive feedback regarding the school's environment reflect a successful anti-bullying culture.
- **Improved SEND Support:** Ensuring SEND pupils are safe, supported, and able to thrive in a bullying-free environment is a key marker of success.
- **Parental Feedback:** Positive feedback from parents about the school's handling of bullying incidents and support for both victims and bullies is an essential indicator of policy success.

Adventure Wellbeing School is deeply committed to ensuring a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for all pupils, particularly those with SEND. Bullying in any form is unacceptable, and we will continue to work diligently to prevent, address, and resolve bullying incidents. Our anti-bullying policy is a critical component of our mission to promote all pupils' well-being and academic success. By fostering a culture of kindness, respect, and understanding, we ensure that no child is left to suffer in silence.

For further support, pupils, staff, and parents can access the following resources:

- [Bullying UK](#)
- [Childline](#)
- [Anti-Bullying Alliance](#)