



Great Torrington School

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Approving Committee:	T&L and ratify at FGB
Approval date:	29/01/26 and 12/02/26
Reference to the item within the relevant Committee minutes:	2025/26/T&L/42
To Full Governors Y/N Minute Reference	2025/26/FGB/47
Staff Sponsor	NMM
Date of the next review of the Policy Document:	Autumn 2027

In this policy where staff is referred to this relates to all members of both teaching and non-teaching staff.

1. ETHOS AND VALUES

At GTS we recognise that if bullying behaviour is left unaddressed can have serious consequences on a young person's mental health as well as being a possible barrier to their learning; both having a lasting effect on the young person's lives into adulthood.

GTS is committed to creating a safe environment where young people can learn and socialise freely and without fear. Bullying behaviour is completely contrary to our school values. We recognise bullying is a complex and emotive issue and we will not tolerate it any form and will act swiftly to address it. We aim to create an environment in which targeted children (and their families) feel safe to tell when bullying does occur and confident that action will be taken by the school. Parents and carers, pupils and governors, as well as school staff, will be fundamentally involved in the implementation, monitoring and revision of this policy.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. The aim of the policy is to prevent and deal with any behaviour deemed as bullying, and to promote an ethos where bullying is regarded as unacceptable, so that a safe and secure environment is created for everyone to learn and work in.

2. Objectives:

- a. To reduce the frequency of bullying incidents.
- b. To increase the likelihood that incidents are disclosed to responsible adults.
- c. To intervene effectively when bullying happens.
- d. To improve children's safety and well-being.

3. The school will aim to achieve its objectives through:

- a. Raising awareness of, and defining bullying, as well as gaining an understanding as to why children bully.
- b. Positive action to prevent bullying through Tutor time, assemblies and opportunities through other curriculum areas.
- c. Development of a consistent response to any bullying incidents that may occur.
- d. Provision of support for all members of the school community who may be involved in a bullying situation.
- e. Developing and supporting home, school and community partnerships.

3. DEFINITION OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

1. **Bullying behaviour is a subjective experience but for the benefit of this policy we are taking the DFE definition set out in its document "Preventing and Tackling Bullying":**

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

At GTS we consider bullying to be:

- Repetitive, wilful or persistent
- Intentionally harmful, carried out by an individual or a group
- An imbalance of power leaving the victim feeling defenceless.

Pupils, Staff and Parents are encouraged to think S.T.O.P when considering whether a child is being bullied or being a bully.

Several Times On Purpose

It should be noted that a single incident can be treated as bullying (or a safeguarding issue) if there is significant harm, exploitation, or protected-character targeting—consistent with DfE guidance.

What is Bullying?

Bullying occurs when an individual or a group uses strength or power to hurt, either physically or emotionally, by intimidating or demeaning others.

Bullying behaviour can be physical, verbal, emotional, cyber, racist, sexual, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, disablist or sexist. It is usually persistent and is often covert, and is a conscious attempt to hurt, threaten or frighten someone. Pupils who are being bullied, may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences, or clinging to adults.

There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school.

Bullying behaviour can take many forms including:

- Physical - which can include kicking, hitting, pushing and taking away belongings;
- Verbal - which includes name calling, mocking and making offensive comments;
- Emotional - which includes isolating an individual or spreading rumours about them;
- Cyber/Online-Bullying - where technology is used to hurt an individual –for instance text messaging or posting messages/images on the internet or any form of social media.
*(Online bullying should be reported to the platform provider or the police, however where online conduct affects school climate, wellbeing or safety, the school **will** investigate and respond when online bullying **impacts a pupil's education, safety or attendance**, liaising with platforms/police as needed) The Anti-Bullying Policy is aligned with **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025**, which confirms that online safety is a core safeguarding responsibility for schools. KCSIE groups online risks into the **four Cs—content, contact, conduct and commerce**—all of which are relevant to bullying and cyberbullying, including exposure to harmful or misleading material, peer-on-peer harassment, harmful online behaviour and scams or coercion*
- Racist - occurs when bullying behaviour is motivated by racial, ethnic or cultural prejudice.
- Sexual - is where someone makes unwanted physical contact or makes sexually abusive comments.
- Homophobic and biphobic - occurs when bullying behaviour is motivated by a prejudice against lesbian, gay or bisexual people.

- Transphobic - occurs when bullying behaviour is motivated by a prejudice against people who identify as trans
- Disablist - occurs when bullying behaviour is motivated by a prejudice against people with any form of disability.
- Sexist - occurs when bullying behaviour is motivated by a prejudice against someone because of their gender

With the advance in new technologies, school is aware there is an increased risk of cyber bullying using e-mails, instant messenger, social networking sites, and public websites inappropriately. Therefore our school has an ICT user's policy which all students and parents sign, along with a separate ESafety policy.

Some warning signs that a student is being bullied

- Changes in academic performance
- Appears anxious
- Regularly feeling sick or unwell. Wanting to visit the Pupil Coaches/Medical regularly.
- Reluctance to come to school.
- Clothes/bags torn or damaged.
- Money/possessions going missing.
- Unexplained cuts and bruises.
- Unexplained behaviour changes, e.g. moody, bad-tempered, tearful.
- Unhappiness.
- Loss of appetite.
- Not sleeping.
- Loss of weight
- Seen alone a lot
- Not very talkative

Some reasons why people bully

- Desire to appear powerful
- Unhappiness
- Feelings of inadequacy
- Difficulties at home.
- Learned behaviour (They too have been bullied)

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying behaviour is.
2. All governors and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying behaviour is reported.
3. All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying and what they should do if bullying arises.

5. PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING

1. **Reporting Incidents:**

Incidents are recorded by **any member of staff** who will pass on via email to the pupil's tutor, Pupil coach (PC) and Head of Learning (HOL).

2. Responding to Incidents:

- All incidents of bullying to be discussed by HOL and PC and to gather for information from pupils and colleagues.
- Regular discussion item at fortnightly House Link Meetings.
- Bullying behaviour that involves sexual harassment or sexual violence, coercion, exploitation, significant harm or repeated escalation is treated as **child-on-child abuse** and managed as a **safeguarding concern** under **KCSIE 2025**, with the **DSL leading the process** in line with the school's **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**.
- Where bullying affects **attendance**, the pastoral lead, DSL and attendance lead will act jointly, following *KCSIE 2025* and DfE attendance guidance, to remove barriers and secure the child's return.

3. Recording of Incidents:

All information obtained during investigation should be logged on CPOMS for both parties as well as keeping paper copied on both parties files.

It is our duty under the **Equality Act 2010**, including the **Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)**, which requires schools to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations across all **protected characteristics** (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation).

- One off incident – action taken – logged in personal file. Communication with parents/carers.
Initial bullying concern letter sent home. (Appendix 1)
- Second incident or one which required more significant intervention should be logged on the Bullying Log – Stage 1.
Communication with parents/carers.
Stage One Bullying Log letter sent home. (Appendix 2)
- Repeated incident or serious incident requiring significant intervention logged on Bullying Log – Stage 2.
Communication with parents/carers.
Stage Two Bullying Log letter sent home. (Appendix 3)
Parent meeting arranged with HoL and AHT Pastoral and Behaviour
All **prejudice-based bullying and discrimination incidents** are identified, recorded and responded to in line with statutory guidance and **Devon County Council** expectations by -
Completion of BPHI which is sent to the LA. (Appendix 4)
- HOL/PC to collect and monitor incidents and complete bullying form where necessary. Assistant Head Teacher (AHT) (Pastoral and Behaviour) to meet with HOL. There will be communication between pupil/staff/parents by HOL or AHT.

4. **Follow-up to Incidents:**

- a. Parents and pupils may be invited to attend Restorative Justice Meetings.
- b. Consideration of interventions such as Social Skills delivered in the HC.
- c. The school will inform Devon Inclusion Team where necessary.
- d. Work with GTS Inclusion Partner where necessary.
- c. The school, where necessary, will inform outside agencies.
- d. The school, where necessary, will inform the community police.
- e. Pupils to be offered counselling and/or support where appropriate.

5. **Appeals Procedure:**

It is the right of every pupil and their parents or guardians to appeal to the Chair of Governors if they consider that a bullying matter has been dealt with insensitively or ineffectively. This appeal should only be as a last resort and should always follow a complaint to the Headteacher and failure to act on that complaint. If no satisfaction is gained from the Headteacher or the Governing Body then communication with the Children & Young People's Services Office, Civic Centre, Barnstaple is advised.

6. **SANCTIONS**

1. There is no single solution to bullying, at GTS we will consider the most appropriate actions in order to achieve a positive outcome for the pupils and families involved. Appropriate sanctions will be carried out in line with the school's Behaviour for Learning Policy (Policy no. 8), sanctions will be fairly and consistently applied.

2. Depending on circumstances sanctions might include:

- a. Lunchtime detention – pastoral
- b. After school detention with Head of Learning
- c. SLT detention
- d. Internal Suspension – 1 day
- e. Internal Exclusion – 1 to 3 days
- f. Fixed term exclusion 1 to 5 days
- g. Permanent exclusion

3. In addition to a sanction a restorative justice conversation between the target of bullying behaviour and the pupil/s who have displayed bullying behaviour is encouraged, but only where it is believed it will have a positive impact.

7. **STRATEGIES FOR THE PREVENTION AND REDUCTION OF BULLYING:**

1. Buddy system
2. Assemblies
3. Anti-bullying week
4. Peer support
5. Drama, role-play about bullying
6. PSHE
7. Counselling
8. Tutor time.

9. Displays
10. Referral to the Hardy Centre
11. Pupil Coaches
12. Youth worker
13. Lunchtime club
14. ICT KS3 cyber bullying E safety
15. Workshops
16. Police presentations
17. Governor link
18. TLC card

8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

1. JLT – pupil voice
2. Regular mini-surveys.
2. HOLs/PCs to ensure bullying log is up to date.
3. Survey for parents, pupils and staff

9. OTHER POLICIES

This policy should be read alongside our Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Attendance Policy and Behaviour Policy. We follow *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025* and DfE *Preventing and tackling bullying (2017)*. We comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. Where bullying behaviour constitutes child-on-child abuse or indicates a safeguarding risk, the DSL will lead our response in line with KCSIE.

10. GUIDELINES

Guidelines for All Staff:

1. All staff undertake all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and well-being of young people under their supervision and will endeavour to pick-up on and address, issues that impact adversely on them at the earliest possible stage.
2. For a pupil to discuss incidents of this nature a pupil must feel great confidence in the adult concerned. Ideally such discussion will take place in a private space and be given adequate time. In every circumstance teachers should be seen to listen carefully and accept what pupils say in a calm and non-judgemental manner. Frequently children who are the target of bullying behaviour have low self-esteem and lack confidence. One way of redressing this is the willingness of the teacher to listen and then to demonstrate that the individual concerned is being respected and is worthy of attention. At the end of a discussion the pupil must know that the teacher is concerned, that they know bullying behaviour has happened and that help will be offered. Confidentiality may not be able to be kept depending on the circumstance.
3. Within the school procedures for handling incidents, or difficulty, the pupil should be given access to a member of staff with whom they can discuss any further problems. It will be helpful for the pupil to decide who this should be. In due course it may be necessary to work with a pupil and/or parents on strategies that will help to safeguard against further incidents.
4. Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications –

could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, any person who sends an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender, is guilty of an offence if their purpose in sending it was to cause distress or anxiety to the recipient. In appropriate cases and in consultation with target of bullying behaviour and parents, AHT may refer to the PCSO.

5. Strategies might include:

- a. Helping the individual to return to the group in which they have been bullied, considering, for example, what the pupil might say on meeting the pupil who has displayed bullying behaviour.
- b. Enabling the pupil to express feelings about being a target of bullying and fears about the future.
- c. Considering with the pupil whether aspects of their own behaviour might be inviting a bullying behaviour from others.
- d. Incidents of “racial abuse” are reported to the appropriate anti-discriminatory organisation and forms will be completed and handed to HOL/AHT link.
- e. Helping pupils to deal with private feelings, such as those of shame, humiliation or fear.
- f. Working with the pupil to find the most important aspect of the problem, offering a weekly support or where available and appropriate, counselling sessions.
- g. Consider with the pupil the most appropriate places in which to spend non-structured time.
- h. Assisting the pupil to participate in activities.
- i. Experiences can be introduced in which an individual can develop positive attitudes to his or her own performance.
- j. Work with the pupil if there are identification triggers for the bullying. Teaching staff should be aware that pupils who are CIC, SEN, Young Carers are among the groups who are most vulnerable to bullying.

11. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Staff CPD. All staff (including support, supply and volunteers) receive annual CPD on identification, recording and response.

Use of the Devon One Minute guides at staff briefing are used throughout the year.

[One minute guide - Understanding bullying.pdf](#)
[No 14 Child on Child Abuse -Jan 2023 \(1\).pdf](#)

11. GUIDELINES FOR INVESTIGATING BULLYING

1. If you can't deal with it straight away, make an appointment (the sooner the better).
2. Get the facts before you act.
3. Confirm those facts with a neutral party, if possible.
4. Check out the background with tutor/PC who knows the pupil well.
5. Interview pupils singly and minimise the risk of collusion.
6. Maintain confidentiality.
7. Recognise that getting to the truth often takes time and persistence.
8. If in doubt, get a second opinion from a colleague.

9. Make early contact with parents (of target of bullying behaviour and pupil displaying bullying behaviour) unless the target makes a strong and well-reasoned case to the contrary.
10. Enforce appropriate sanctions.
11. Arrange for the victim to receive support.
12. Record incident on CPOMS
13. Communicate outcomes and action to parents and to staff on a “need to know” basis.
14. Ensure that the situation is monitored as is appropriate.

12. BULLYING BEHAVIOUR – ADVICE TO STAFF

1. Take any report of bullying behaviour seriously.
2. Be prompt to class and prompt to duty.
3. Don't leave your class unless it's an emergency.
4. Always be on the look-out for behaviour which points to bullying: e.g. unexpected silence, that 'look', bags out-of-place, pupils where they shouldn't be, torn/spoiled clothing, whispering, tripping/kicking, poor attendance etc. Adults 'noticing' can save a pupil reporting and escalate the behaviour being managed and dealt with.
5. Record all incidents of bullying behaviour

13. BULLYING BEHAVIOUR – ADVICE TO PUPILS

1. Tell someone early and nip it in the bud – prevention is better than cure.
2. Tell someone else – support a friend in need.
3. Don't leave your personal belongings unattended – this can often lead to problems.
4. Stick with your friends – this makes bullying behaviour more difficult.
5. Stay away from places where you know trouble can happen.
6. If you suffer problems on a school bus where you can't get away, seek help from the school leaders. If that doesn't work, speak to your parents or see your tutor who may decide to alert your Head of Learning or AHT to the problem.
7. Trust those people who deal with bullying - they know what there are doing.
8. Complete a personal diary/log of incident (stage times, date, place, witnesses).
9. Be aware of cyber-bullying collect evidence (text message, e-mails, screen shots).

14. ADVICE TO PARENTS when a child has been the target of bullying behaviour

1. If you suspect your child is being bullied – ask him/her.
2. Recognise that it often takes courage for a child to admit they are being bullied. They will almost always have tried already to deal with the problems themselves.
3. Listen carefully to him/her and find out what's going on.
4. Help your child to keep a record/diary of incidents.
5. Take what he/she tells you seriously.
6. Inform his/her tutor or Head of Year.
7. Work with the School to solve the problem – we cannot succeed if we work independently.
8. Help your child cope with the bullying and equip him/her to resist it until it goes away.
9. Don't hope it will go away – the sooner you act, the more chance we have of nipping the problem in the bud.
10. Work with any identified outside agencies.

15. Advice to parents when a child has displayed bullying behaviour

It is very difficult for parents and carers when they find out that their child has been involved in a bullying incident - perhaps even more so if their child is the one accused of bullying behaviour. Anyone is capable of bullying behaviour. As parents have a key role in helping their child to recognise the harm they have caused and encouraging them to change their behaviour in the future. All parents and carers should speak to their children about what bullying is - and how it makes people feel.

Some top tips for parents from the Anti-Bullying Alliance include:

- Make sure your child knows what bullying behaviour is and why it is wrong
- Make sure your child knows they can talk to you, or to another adult if they are worried about bullying
- Help your child to realise that no one has the right to pressure them into something they don't want to do - this includes bullying others
- Make sure they are not bullying others in retaliation for bullying they have suffered.
- Talk to your child about information that is shared through social networking sites - let them know that they shouldn't upload comments or images that could hurt someone else - or pass on content that is designed to hurt someone else. Let them know most social networking sites have report buttons if they have seen bullying behaviour and they want to stop it.
- Make it clear that you do not tolerate the use of disrespectful and hurtful language and behaviour as a family (it's vital that parents model this)
- Try not to see the behaviour as a permanent reflection of their character - but make clear the behaviour you would like to change. It may be that their current friendship group is having a negative effect on their behaviour - in which case you should talk about what it means to be a friend, and gently encourage them to form more positive relationships.

Appendix 1 – Initial Bullying Concern Letter

Name
Address 1
Address 2
Address 3
Address 4

Day Month 20

Re: Initial Bullying Behaviour Concern Student:

Dear

I am writing to inform you that it has come to my attention that your child, *Name*, has been involved in some unpleasant behaviour that has impacted on pupils.

At this point it appears that this is an isolated incident and the matter has been resolved successfully. However, you need to be aware that if this behaviour is repeated against the child involved, or if indeed there is another similar incident, your child's name will be recorded on stage one of our Bullying Log.

We will refer to this log should *Name* be reported to us again.

I would like to thank you in advance for your support in ensuring the welfare of all pupils here at GTS. If you wish to discuss this with me, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Head of Learning

Appendix 2 – Stage 1 Bullying Concern Letter

Name
Address 1
Address 2
Address 3
Address 4

Day Month 20

Re: Stage One Bullying Log – INSERT PUPIL NAME

Dear PARENT NAME,

Unfortunately, I am writing to you in response to a further incident of ongoing unpleasant behaviour.

As you will be aware I wrote to you on INSERT DATE to inform you of our expectations regarding your child's conduct towards other pupils.

It appears that INSERT NAME has not responded to this and I am therefore informing you that it has been necessary to record your child's name on stage one of our Bullying Behaviour Log.

Bullying behaviour will not be tolerated at GTS and your child must make every effort to ensure there are no repeated incidences of this nature. Should this not be the case we will have no option but to notify the local authority using their Bullying and Prejudice/Hate Incidents (BPHI) form.

This is not something we do lightly but we will not allow pupils at GTS to feel they are being targeted and made to feel unhappy due to the actions of others. If your child is unable to address this unacceptable behaviour further sanctions and interventions will be required.

I am hoping you are able to work alongside the school to help ensure that INSERT NAME learns to accept responsibility for their actions and to develop an understanding of the impact their actions have on others.

If you wish to discuss this with me, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Name
Head of Learning NAME House

Appendix 3 – Stage 2 Bullying Letter

Name
Address 1
Address 2
Address 3
Address 4

Day Month 20

Re: Stage Two Bullying Log – INSERT PUPIL NAME

Dear PARENT NAME,

Disappointingly, I am writing to advise you that there has been a further episode of bullying behaviour exhibited by INSERT NAME.

You will be aware NAME'S Head of Learning NAME wrote to you on INSERT DATE to make you aware that any further episodes of bullying behaviour will require us to follow the local authority process of notifying them of a bullying incident.

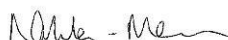
INSERT NAME has continued with bullying behaviours and I am therefore informing you that it has been necessary to record your child's name at Stage Two of our Bullying Log and to also notify the local authority using their Bullying and Prejudice/Hate Incidents (BPHI) form.

I need to be very clear that bullying behaviour will not be tolerated at GTS and your child must understand that any further incidents of bullying behaviour will lead to further sanctions that could include permanent exclusion. Could you please attend a meeting with myself and your child's Head of Learning on INSERT TIME DATE so we can discuss how we can prevent INSERT NAME's behaviour continuing to impact on other children.

A permanent exclusion is not something we would like to consider for any pupil but we will not allow pupils at GTS to suffer from ongoing or significant episodes of bullying.

It is essential that you are able to work alongside the school to help ensure that INSERT NAME learns to accept responsibility for their actions and modifies their behaviour.

Yours sincerely,



Niki Miller-Marshall
Assistant Head Pastoral and Behaviour