

# SVS Anti-Bullying Policy 2023-2024



## Approval and review dates

| Policy                   | Date of last review | Date of next review |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| SVS Anti-Bullying Policy | September 2023      | September 2024      |

## SVS Statement on Bullying

This school is a place where every person has the right to be themselves and to be included in a safe and happy environment. Everyone at our school is equal and should be treated with respect.

All children and young people have the right to go about their daily lives without the fear of being threatened, assaulted or harassed. No one should underestimate the impact that bullying can have on a person's life. It can cause high levels of distress, affecting young people's well-being, behaviour, academic and social development right through into adulthood.

At Sandwell Valley School, we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere free from oppression and abuse. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone. All types of bullying are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All students should feel able to talk about concerns and when bullying behaviour is brought to our attention, prompt and effective action will be taken.

### 1 Aims

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at our school. At our school the safety, welfare and well-being of all students and staff is a key priority. We take all incidences of bullying seriously and it is our duty as a whole school community to take measures to prevent and tackle any bullying, harassment or discrimination.

We actively promote values of respect and equality and work to ensure that difference and diversity is celebrated across the whole school community. We want to enable our students to become responsible citizens and to prepare them for life in 21st Century Britain. These values reflect those that will be expected of our students by society when they leave school and enter the world of work or further study.

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We are committed to improving our school's approach to tackling bullying by regularly monitoring, reviewing and assessing the impact of our preventative measures.

## 2 Legal framework

**This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on:**

Preventing and Tackling Bullying - Advice for headteachers, staff and Governing Bodies – July 2017. Preventing and Tackling Bullying - Advice for School Leaders, staff and Governing Bodies (Guidance)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/623895/Preventing\\_and\\_tackling\\_bullying\\_advice.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/623895/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf)

Behaviour and discipline in schools: advice for principals and school staff, 2016

Behaviour in schools: advice for principals and school staff 2022

Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement - 2022

**This policy has due regard to legislation, including, but not limited to the following:**

Education and Inspections Act 2006

Equality Act 2010

Children Act 1989

Protection from Harassment Act 1997

Malicious Communications Act 1988

Public Order Act 1986

Communications Act 2003

Human Rights Act 1998

Crime and Disorder Act 1998

**This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the schools:**

Behaviour Policy

Social Media Policy

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Equality Policy

E-safety Policy

Safeguarding; Safeguarding Statement

Disciplinary Procedure

SEN policy

Cyber Bullying and Internet Grooming Policy

## 3 Objectives of this Policy

- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, students and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is
- All governors and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the centers' policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported
- All students and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises
- We take bullying seriously, Students and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported
- Bullying will not be tolerated

## 4 Definition

### 4.1. What Is Bullying?

*"Bullying behaviour abuses an imbalance of power to repeatedly and intentionally cause emotional or physical harm to another person or group of people. Isolated instances of hurtful behaviour, teasing or arguments between individuals would not be seen as bullying" (Torfaen definition 2008).* Bullying generally takes one of four forms:

- a. Indirect being unfriendly, spreading rumors, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding bags or books).
- b. Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, slapping or any form of violence.
- c. Verbal name-calling, teasing, threats, sarcasm.
- d. Cyber all areas of internet misuse, such as nasty and/or threatening emails, misuse of blogs, gaming websites, internet chat rooms and instant messaging, mobile threats by text messaging and calls. Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities.

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Bullying is generally characterised

- Repetition: Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over a period of time.
- Intent: The perpetrator(s) means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental.
- Targeting: Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.
- Power imbalance: Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations.

Bullying can be based on any of the following things:

- Race (racist bullying)
- Religion or belief
- Culture or class
- Gender (sexist bullying)
- Sexual orientation (homophobic or biphobic bullying)
- Gender identity (transphobic bullying)
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) or disability
- Appearance or health conditions
- Related to home or other personal situation
- Related to another vulnerable group of people –such as young carers

## **Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?**

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be bullied. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Students who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. Training and educational institutes have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

## **Statutory implications to include the protected characteristics**

Under the Equality Act 2010, the school understands that it has a responsibility to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Under the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998, the school understands that it could have charges brought against it if it allows the rights of children and young people at the academy to be breached by failing to take bullying seriously.

Although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, some types of harassment, threatening behaviour and/or communications may be considered criminal offences:

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Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to electronically communicate with another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or 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.

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.

Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by means of a public electronic communications network, a message, or other matter, that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information through any media, including internet sites.

Other forms of bullying which are illegal and should be reported to police include: violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation and hate crimes.

## 4.2. Upskirting

Perpetrators will face two years in prison. By criminalising this distressing practice, it is hoped that it deters people from committing the crime.

Upskirting, where committed to obtain sexual gratification, can result in the most serious offenders being placed on the sex offenders register.

The new law will send a clear message that such behaviour is criminal and will not be tolerated.

### What is Upskirting?

Upskirting is a term used to describe the act of taking a sexually intrusive photograph up someone's skirt without their permission.

## 5 Implementation

The following steps may be taken when dealing with incidents (also refer to Behaviour Policy):

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached
- A clear and precise account of the incident will be recorded and given to the Team Leaders/Principal

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- The Team Leader/Principal will interview all concerned and will record the incident
- Key Tutors will be kept informed and if it persists the form tutor will advise the appropriate subject teachers
- Parents will be kept informed
- Punitive measures will be used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties concerned
- If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted

## Students

Sandwell Valley School recognises the need to support students who are particularly vulnerable to include students with SEND. We educate and respond to students who may be more at risk of being targeted however we understand that this does not necessarily mean that SEND students will be bullied. We have student safeguarding officers and peer mentors who can provide extra support to our more vulnerable students.

### Students who are being bullied:

If a student is being bullied they are encouraged to not retaliate but to tell someone they trust about it such as a friend, family member or trusted adult. They are also encouraged to report any bullying incidents in school:

- Report to a teacher – such as a form tutor, head of year, Behaviour and Pastoral Manager, mentors, DSLs and Principal
- Report bullying by: Google email, Totoot MIS Phoning or using the anonymous school bullying reporting box
- Call ChildLine to speak with someone in confidence on 0800 1111

### Students who have been bullied will be supported by:

1. Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a form tutor or a member of staff of their choice
2. Reassuring the Student
3. Offering continuous support
4. Restoring self-esteem and confidence

### Students who have bullied will be helped by:

1. Discussing what happened
2. Discovering why the Student became involved
3. Establishing the wrong doing and the need to change

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4. Informing parents or guardians to help change the attitude and behaviour of the Young Person

The following disciplinary steps can be taken (refer to behaviour policy):

1. Official warnings to cease offending
2. Detention
3. Exclusion from certain areas/activities
4. Minor fixed-term suspension
5. Major fixed-term suspension
6. Permanent exclusion

Within the curriculum the tutors will raise the awareness of the nature of bullying through inclusion in PSHE, form tutorial time, assemblies and subject areas, as appropriate, in an attempt to eradicate such behaviour.

## 6 Roles and responsibilities

### 6.1. Staff

All school staff, both teaching and non-teaching have a duty to report bullying, to be vigilant to the signs of bullying and to play an active role in the school's efforts to prevent bullying. If staff are aware of bullying, they should reassure the students involved and inform a relevant member of the pastoral team.

### 6.2. Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team and the principal have overall responsibility for ensuring that the anti-bullying policy is followed by all members of staff and that the school upholds its duty to promote the safety and well-being of all young people.

### 6.3. Parents and carers

Parents and carers should look out for potential signs of bullying such as distress, lack of concentration, feigning illness or other unusual behaviour. Parents and carers should tell their child not to retaliate and support and encourage them to report the bullying. Parents and carers can report an incident of bullying to the school either in person, or by phoning or emailing the school office.

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## 6.4. Students

Students should not take part in any kind of bullying and should watch out for potential signs of bullying among their peers. They should never be bystanders to incidents of bullying. If students witness bullying they should support the victim, encourage them to report the bullying and, if possible, accompany them to tell a trusted adult.

## 7 Prevention

We will use some or all of the following to help raise awareness of and prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

1. Writing and implementing a set of school rules
2. Signing a behaviour contract
3. Using topics/activities to reinforce awareness
4. Reading case studies and inviting external presenters to talk about bullying
5. Having regular discussions about bullying and why it matters
6. Setting up and sustaining a student forum.

### Signs and Symptoms

Many young people do not speak out when being bullied and may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and should investigate if a child/young person:

- is frightened of walking to or from the school
- doesn't want to use public transport
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to attend (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- uses excuses to miss education (headache, stomach ache etc)
- begins to suffer academically
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises or shows signs of being in a fight
- comes home hungry (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable



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- is bullying other young people or siblings
- changes their eating habits (stops eating or over eats)
- goes to bed earlier than usual
- is unable to sleep
- wets the bed
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives unlikely excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous and jumpy when a text message or email is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should always be investigated.

### **The Law**

Some forms of bullying are illegal and should be reported to the police.

These include:

- violence or assault
- theft
- repeated harassment or intimidation, e.g. name calling, threats and abusive phone calls, emails or text messages
- hate crimes

## **8 Monitoring, evaluation and review**

The school will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.