



George Stephenson High School

Anti-Bullying Policy

September 2025





Policy Compliance Governance Page

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Sept 2025		NEW



1. Context

George Stephenson High School is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and respectful environment where all members of the school community feel valued and can learn free from fear, intimidation, harassment or bullying.

Bullying can have a serious impact on a child's wellbeing, attendance, educational achievement and mental health. The school recognises that bullying is a safeguarding concern and may constitute child-on-child abuse. All reports of bullying will be taken seriously and responded to promptly, consistently and fairly.

We are committed to creating a culture where:

- All pupils are treated with dignity and respect.
- Difference and diversity are celebrated.
- Bullying, discrimination and harassment are not tolerated.
- Pupils feel confident to report concerns.
- Appropriate support is provided to all children involved.
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The school recognises that bullying may occur both inside and outside of school, including online. Where bullying outside school impacts on pupils' safety, wellbeing or education, the school will take all reasonably practicable steps to investigate and address the issue.

This policy should be read alongside:

- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Child-on-Child Abuse Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equality Information and Objectives

2. Legislative and Guidance Framework

This policy has been developed with reference to:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Education Act 2011
- Children Act 1989
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) (Current edition)
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (Department for Education)
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Guidance
- Behaviour in Schools Guidance
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Guidance

The school acknowledges its duty to:

- Prevent all forms of bullying.
- Safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Foster positive relationships across the school community.
- Protect pupils with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.
- Make reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND.

3. Definition of Bullying



Bullying is repeated behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to hurt, upset, intimidate or harm another person and involves an actual or perceived imbalance of power.

Bullying may occur:

- Face-to-face
- Online (cyberbullying)
- Through social exclusion
- Through discriminatory behaviour

Bullying can include:

Physical Bullying

- Hitting
- Kicking
- Pushing
- Damaging belongings
- Physical intimidation

Verbal Bullying

- Name-calling
- Insults
- Threats
- Offensive comments

Social or Relational Bullying

- Deliberate exclusion
- Spreading rumours
- Public humiliation
- Encouraging others to isolate someone

Online Bullying

- Abusive messages
- Sharing harmful content
- Fake accounts
- Circulating images without consent
- Online harassment

Prejudice-Based Bullying

Bullying may be motivated by prejudice relating to:

- Race or ethnicity
- Religion or belief
- Disability
- Special Educational Needs
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Appearance
- Socio-economic background



- Family circumstances
- Caring responsibilities
- Being looked after or previously looked after

The school recognises its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and will give particular consideration to incidents involving protected characteristics.

Bullying:

Bullying is usually characterised by repeated behaviour involving an imbalance of power. However, a single serious incident may still be treated and recorded as bullying where its impact is significant, where it involves prejudice-based behaviour, or where safeguarding concerns are present.

Bullying is not:

- A one-off fight or argument
- Two-way unkindness where two students or two groups are both unkind to each other
- A friend sometimes being nasty
- An argument with a friend

While the incidents above may require a response from the school, these are not defined as bullying.

The school will record and monitor all incidents of prejudice-based bullying and discriminatory behaviour.

4. Bullying as a Safeguarding Concern

George Stephenson High School recognises bullying as a potential safeguarding issue. All incidents will be assessed on a case-by-case basis to determine whether:

- Early Help is required.
- Safeguarding concerns exist.
- Children's Social Care involvement is needed.
- Police involvement is necessary.
- Additional pastoral intervention is required.

Some bullying behaviour may also constitute child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment, sexual violence, coercive behaviour, image-based abuse, discriminatory abuse, hate incidents and serious online abuse. Such concerns will be managed in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The school recognises that children who engage in bullying behaviour may themselves require support and intervention.

5. Vulnerable Groups

Some pupils may be more vulnerable to bullying than others.

These may include:

- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils with disabilities



- LGBTQ+ pupils
- Young carers
- Children looked after
- Previously looked after children
- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds
- Pupils experiencing mental health difficulties

The school recognises that pupils with SEND may face additional barriers in recognising, reporting or communicating concerns about bullying.

Reasonable adjustments will be made to support participation in investigations and interventions.

6. Prevention and Education

Bullying prevention is a whole-school responsibility.

The school promotes positive behaviour through:

- PSHE education
- Assemblies
- Tutor programme activities
- Curriculum learning
- Student voice initiatives
- Anti-Bullying Week
- Safer Internet Day
- Pastoral support programmes
- Equality and diversity education

Celebrating Student Individuality (CSI)

The CSI Group supports the school's commitment to equality, respect and inclusion by:

- Promoting awareness of diversity
- Leading assemblies
- Creating student resources
- Supporting whole-school campaigns

Annual priorities will be informed by student voice, behaviour data and safeguarding information.

7. Student Expectations

All pupils are expected to:

Treat Others with Respect

- Be kind and considerate.
- Respect differences and diversity.
- Use appropriate language.
- Demonstrate empathy.

Think Before You Act

- Consider the impact of your words and actions.
- Use technology responsibly.
- Avoid behaviour that causes harm, exclusion or embarrassment.

Speak Up Safely

If you witness bullying:



- Do not encourage it.
- Support the pupil experiencing bullying.
- Report concerns to a trusted adult.

Report Bullying

Students should report:

- Bullying they experience.
- Bullying they witness.
- Concerns about another pupil's wellbeing.

Reports may be made to:

- Tutor
- Class teacher
- Guidance Manager
- Pastoral Leader
- Safeguarding Team
- Senior Leader

Where available, students may also report concerns through anonymous reporting systems.

Help Create a Positive School Culture

- Welcome others.
- Include people in activities.
- Celebrate diversity.
- Be a positive role model.

8. Guidance for Staff

Any member of staff who identifies bullying behaviour must challenge it where safe to do so and record concerns in accordance with safeguarding and behaviour procedures, even where no formal complaint has been made.

When a pupil reports bullying, staff must:

1. Listen carefully and take concerns seriously.
2. Reassure the pupil that they have done the right thing by reporting.
3. Record the concern on CPOMS immediately.
4. Notify the appropriate Guidance Manager and Safeguarding Team.
5. Preserve evidence where appropriate.
6. Avoid making assumptions before investigating.
7. Keep the pupil informed about next steps.

Throughout any investigation staff should:

- Use neutral language where appropriate.
- Avoid victim-blaming.
- Consider safeguarding risks.
- Consider SEND needs.
- Monitor all pupils involved.

9. Guidance for Parents and Carers

Parents and carers should:

- Remain calm if concerns are raised.



- Listen carefully to their child.
- Reassure them that reporting is the right thing to do.
- Encourage communication with school staff.
- Share concerns promptly with the school.
- Work collaboratively with the school to resolve issues.
- The school is committed to maintaining open communication with families throughout investigations.

If concerns remain unresolved, parents may follow the school's complaints procedure.

10. Online Bullying (Cyberbullying)

George Stephenson High School recognises that online bullying can have a significant impact on a young person's wellbeing, safety, attendance and educational progress. Online bullying may occur through social media platforms, messaging services, gaming platforms, websites, email or other digital technologies.

The school will respond appropriately where online behaviour affects the safety, welfare or education of pupils, whether the behaviour occurs on or off the school site.

Parental Responsibility

Parents and carers have primary responsibility for monitoring and supervising their child's use of:

- Social media platforms
- Messaging applications
- Personal mobile devices
- Gaming platforms
- Internet activity outside school

Whilst the school will educate pupils about online safety and responsible digital behaviour, it is not possible for the school to monitor pupils' personal social media accounts, private messaging services, internet use at home or activity conducted outside the school's network and devices.

The school cannot provide continuous monitoring of online interactions outside school and relies on parents, carers and pupils acting on concerns when they arise.

Parents and carers are strongly encouraged to:

- Regularly monitor their child's online activity.
- Use parental controls where appropriate.
- Discuss safe and responsible online behaviour.
- Ensure age-appropriate use of social media platforms.
- Report concerns to the relevant platform provider.
- Report criminal behaviour to the police where appropriate.

Reporting Online Bullying

Students should:

- Save evidence wherever possible, including screenshots, messages, images, usernames and web links.
- Avoid retaliating or responding to abusive communications.
- Block and report users through the relevant platform.
- Inform a parent, carer or trusted adult as soon as possible.



- Report concerns to the school where the behaviour impacts on school life, student welfare or student safety.

Parents and carers should report online bullying directly to the school when it involves:

- George Stephenson High School pupils.
- Threats to a child's safety or wellbeing.
- Behaviour likely to affect attendance or learning.
- Behaviour that may constitute child-on-child abuse.

Reporting to the Police

Some incidents of online bullying may constitute criminal offences.

Parents, carers and pupils should be aware that behaviours including, but not limited to:

- Threats of violence
- Harassment or stalking
- Hate crimes
- Coercive or controlling behaviour
- Blackmail
- Sharing indecent images
- Sexual harassment
- Malicious communications

may require police involvement.

Where a criminal offence is suspected, **parents and carers should contact Northumbria Police directly**. The school may also contact the police where safeguarding concerns or potential criminal offences are identified.

The School's Response

When online bullying is reported, the school will:

- Take concerns seriously.
- Assess any safeguarding risks.
- Record incidents appropriately.
- Support the child experiencing the bullying.
- Work with parents and carers to address concerns.
- Apply sanctions where behaviour breaches school rules.
- Refer matters to external agencies where necessary.

The school's primary role is to safeguard pupils, investigate behaviour that affects the school community, and provide support and education. Responsibility for monitoring children's personal online activity and social media use outside school remains primarily with parents and carers.

Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes

Any incident involving the sharing of nude or semi-nude images will be treated as a safeguarding concern and referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Staff must follow current safeguarding guidance and should not view, copy, store or distribute images unless specifically directed through safeguarding procedures.

Appropriate action may include:

- Safeguarding assessments
- Parent/carer involvement



- Early Help support
- Children's Social Care referral

Police involvement where appropriate

The welfare and safety of all pupils involved will remain the school's primary concern at all times.

11. Support for Pupils Experiencing Bullying

The school will provide appropriate support, which may include:

- Regular welfare check-ins
- Pastoral support
- Mentoring
- Counselling interventions
- Safe space arrangements
- Attendance support
- Academic support where learning has been affected

The school recognises that bullying may negatively affect attendance and educational progress and will work with pupils and families to address these issues.

12. Responding to Pupils Displaying Bullying Behaviour

Where bullying is substantiated, responses may include:

- Restorative conversations.
- Reflection activities.
- Behaviour contracts.
- Additional pastoral support.
- Mentoring.
- Internal sanctions.
- Suspension.
- Managed Move.
- Permanent Exclusion (in the most serious cases).

Responses will always consider:

- The severity of the behaviour.
- Any safeguarding concerns.
- SEND considerations.
- Previous incidents.
- Impact on the pupil experiencing bullying.

The school will seek to both hold pupils accountable and address any underlying causes of the behaviour.

13. Monitoring, Recording and Review

The school will:

- Records will include actions taken, support provided, outcomes reached and any follow-up monitoring undertaken.
- Concerns will be addressed at the earliest opportunity to prevent escalation and reduce the likelihood of repeated harm.



- Monitor patterns and trends.
- Analyse prejudice-based incidents.
- Use student voice to evaluate effectiveness.
- Governors will receive anonymised information regarding bullying trends, protected-characteristic incidents and effectiveness of preventative measures as part of their safeguarding oversight responsibilities.
- Review this policy annually.

