

# The South Wolds Academy & Sixth Form

## Anti-Bullying Policy



Date approved by the Governing Body: November 2024

Date to be reviewed: November 2026

## **Introduction**

At The South Wolds Academy and Sixth Form we aim to provide a supportive, caring, and friendly environment which allows all our students to learn in an atmosphere which is focussed on improving their life chances and helping them to maximise their potential. We expect our students to act safely, and feel safe, in and outside of school – we do not tolerate any form of bullying and we are committed to preventing and tackling it. We recognise that as children learn and grow together, they may experience fallouts with their peers, but we are committed to supporting our students to resolve these ‘relational conflicts’ and stop them from progressing to bullying behaviours. If an incident of bullying does occur, we believe our students, parents/carers and staff should feel confident in reporting it and know that all incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Bullying will never be tolerated at our school.

At The South Wolds Academy we encourage open discussions around differences between people, we actively challenge prejudice, and we celebrate diversity. We adopt a contextual safeguarding, trauma-informed approach to bullying and child-on-child abuse, and we are committed to working with families and outside agencies where appropriate.

## **Policy Development**

This policy has been developed to reflect the most recent Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) Statutory Guidance (1<sup>st</sup> September 2024) and was formulated in consultation with the whole school community with input from:

- Members of staff (through staff meetings & consultation)
- Students (through the school council, surveys, safeguarding audits)
- Governors (through governor meetings and governor training)

The policy is based upon guidance from Nottinghamshire ESHAW (Education, Safeguarding, Health & Wellbeing Hub) and is available online in the [Policies & Documents area](#) of the school website

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

All staff at our school are aware that children may bully other children, and that this can happen both inside and outside of school, and online. All staff understand the school’s Anti-Bullying strategy and approach and know the important role that they each have in preventing and tackling bullying.

**The Head Teacher** (Mrs Angus) has overall responsibility for Anti-Bullying at our school. They are responsible for appointing an Anti-Bullying Coordinator and liaising with the Governing body, parents/carers, the Local Authority, and outside agencies when appropriate.

**The Anti-Bullying Coordinator** (Miss Drewett) is also the school's Senior Mental Health Lead and is responsible for:

- Policy development, implementation and review
- Leading a clear anti-bullying culture across the school in which students understand that bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- Working with the Associate Senior Leader (Pastoral) and the Heads of Year to respond to all reported incidents of bullying
- Coordinating Anti-Bullying training and support for staff and parents/carers where appropriate
- Monitoring the effectiveness of strategies for preventing bullying behaviour

**The Designated Safeguarding Leads** (DSL) and their **Deputies** (DDSL) in our school are:

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – Mrs Sarah Brooks

Operational Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – Mr Jake Murphy

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) – Mrs Lucy Danson

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) – Mrs Kate Dawson

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) - Mr Nick Levack

Safeguarding is the responsibility of all, however all staff, parents/carers and students need to be aware of who to report to and how to report any safeguarding concerns.

**The nominated Governor** with responsibility for Anti-Bullying and Behaviour is Mrs Annette Beaumont

### **What is bullying and how does it differ to relational conflict?**

At The South Wolds Academy and Sixth Form we have adopted the definition of bullying provided by the Anti-Bullying Alliance:

***“Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal, or psychological. It can happen face to face or online.”***

We recognise that bullying can take many forms and can affect any child. It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups (for example on grounds of race & ethnicity, religion & belief, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, special educational needs, or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities). Bullying can be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

However, we also recognise that incidents may occur between students, which may not be deemed as 'bullying' but still require support or intervention from trusted adults. These incidents may be referred to as 'relational conflicts' or 'falling out'. Relational conflict differs to bullying in the fact that it is usually between individuals or groups who are relatively similar in power and status (a power balance), and the behaviours or incidents occur occasionally (not repetitive) or occur by accident (not intentional). Usually, following a relational conflict incident, students show remorse and there is a general willingness to make things right or to resolve the conflict.

Not all relational conflict or falling out leads to bullying, but our school is aware that occasionally some can, and we are mindful that unresolved bad feelings or relationship problems left unaddressed can be the start of a pattern of behaviour in which the intention becomes to cause harm or distress.

Although bullying and relational conflicts can take place between individuals, we recognise that it often takes place in front of others (either physically or online), students who witness these incidents/behaviours are often referred to as 'bystanders'.

Regardless of whether an incident or situation is deemed as 'relational conflict' or 'bullying', our school will address the situation and support the students to resolve any negative feelings. Our school will monitor children following a relational conflict to ensure that the situation has been resolved and does not escalate to bullying. Our school will challenge, address, and monitor any incidents of bullying, to ensure that it does not continue and that all students feel supported (this will include the target, the alleged perpetrator, any bystanders, and the wider school community).

### **What does bullying behaviour look like?**

At The South Wolds Academy and Sixth Form we consider the context within which incidents and/or behaviours of concern occur. We will consider the motivations behind the behaviours and will take into account the age and stage of development of the students involved. Our focus will always be the safety and welfare of all children involved.

Bullying behaviour may include, but is not limited to:

- Physical – pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching etc.
- Verbal – name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling.
- Emotional – isolating others, tormenting, hiding books/belongings, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidating, excluding, manipulation, and coercion.
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, exposure to inappropriate films etc.
- Online – posting on social media, sharing photos, sending nasty text messages, social exclusion etc.
- Indirect – can include the exploitation of individuals such as ‘false friendships’, criminal exploitation, sexual exploitation, and radicalisation.
- Prejudice-related – derogatory and discriminatory language and behaviour including that which is racist, sexist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disablist in nature. This language and behaviour may be directed towards people because of their sex, religion or beliefs, race/ethnicity/nationality; because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or trans, or are perceived to be, or have a parent/carer, sibling, or friend who is, because they have a learning or physical disability. Such language and behaviour are generally used to refer to something or someone as inferior.

There is no hierarchy of bullying, all forms of bullying are taken equally seriously and will be dealt with appropriately.

Our school understands that banter is an increasingly relevant part of discussions relating to bullying; however, it is important to acknowledge that banter is not inherently bullying, and it can be an important part of social bonding and friendships. At the same time, we know that some bullying in society is passed off as ‘just banter’, and we know that banter can quickly escalate to inappropriate or harmful exchanges and bullying.

Our school defines ‘prosocial banter’ as ‘playful, typically funny, teasing between friends’. Prosocial banter can occur both online and offline and includes a range of behaviours that may be verbal, physical, or information/message sharing (online). Banter can include some of the bullying behaviours set out in this policy document, so it is important to distinguish between shared positive social bonding and inappropriate banter and bullying. School staff will distinguish between banter and bullying by taking careful consideration of the *intention, content and topic* of reported incidents.

## **Where does bullying take place?**

At The South Wolds academy and Sixth Form we understand that bullying is not confined to the school premises. Bullying can take place outside of school, on the journey to and from school and in the local community. Bullying may also take place online. We will offer support and guidance to students, parents/carers and families who have experienced any type of bullying whether this has taken place inside school, outside of school or online. We are committed to working with outside agencies where appropriate to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying.

## **How to report bullying concerns**

At The South Wolds Academy and Sixth Form we want students, parents/carers, staff, and visitors to confidently report bullying and know that their concerns will be taken seriously. We remain committed to supporting and safeguarding all children involved including the target, the alleged perpetrator, any bystanders/witnesses to bullying behaviour and the wider school community.

We have clear reporting systems for each group of our school community, the effectiveness of these reporting systems is reviewed throughout the academic year and may be expanded to meet the needs of all members of our community.

## **Students, including bystanders/witnesses:**

We ask that all students report concerns of bullying or bullying behaviour to a member of school staff – this can be any member of teaching or non-teaching staff, including a class teacher, form tutor, Head of Year, a member of the office team, or any other member of staff. We talk about trusted adults regularly to remind our children of who they can report concerns to.

The member of staff will listen to the student and make an initial note of their concerns, they will then discuss next steps with them and reassure them that they will be supported. The member of staff will make a formal record of the concern/report on the school's recording system and other relevant members of staff will be alerted. The member of staff will directly alert the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead if the report is deemed urgent or if a child is considered at risk.

We understand that some children may find it difficult to tell a member of staff about their concerns verbally, we therefore have an additional reporting mechanism in place. Our school has an online reporting system, the [Sharp system](#) which a child can use if they feel unable to tell a member of staff about their concerns verbally. This report will be followed up by the student's Head of Year.

Even if the behaviour/incident which has been reported is deemed 'not bullying' and is thought to be 'relational conflict', school staff will still support the students involved and help them to resolve any concerns.

### **Parents/carers**

We understand that it can be very difficult for a parent/carer to be concerned or hear that their child has been the target of bullying, has experienced bullying behaviour or is an alleged perpetrator of bullying.

We ask that if parents/carers have concerns about their child experiencing or perpetrating bullying, that they contact a member of school staff. Initially we ask parents/carers to contact their child's tutor or Head of Year via telephone call or email to explain their concerns. The member of staff will take an initial note of the concerns but may ask to schedule a meeting to allow for more time to discuss the concerns in detail. The tutor/Head of Year will make a formal record of the bullying report on the school's recording system and other relevant members of staff will be alerted. The tutor/Head of Year will directly alert a member of the safeguarding team if the report is deemed urgent or if a student is considered at immediate risk.

**We ask that parents/carers speak directly to the school with their concerns rather than discussing them with other members of the school community in person or online.**

Our school remains committed to supporting students and their families in all instances of bullying and relational conflict and will respond to reports promptly. Even if the behaviour/incident which has been reported is deemed 'not bullying' and is thought to be 'relational conflict', school staff will still support the students involved and help them to resolve any concerns.

We will endeavour to ensure that all parties are kept informed of progress and any developments, but we will also need to show due regard to GDPR. This may mean, at times, that we are not able to provide or share information or updates.

### **School staff**

Our staff work closely with students and therefore may notice a change in a student's behaviour or attitude that might indicate that something is wrong before receiving a report from a student or a member of the school community. If staff have any concerns about a student's welfare or are concerned that a student is displaying behaviours that may show they are the target of bullying or perhaps perpetrating bullying, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told.

We ask that staff report their concerns to a member of the safeguarding team via the reporting system My Concern. This will alert relevant members of staff to begin investigating the report (usually the Head of Year).

The member of staff must directly alert the school's Designated/Deputy Safeguarding Lead if the report is deemed urgent or if a pupil is considered at risk.

### **Visitors**

We ensure that all visitors to our school are aware of our Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures and which staff member they should report any concerns to (the member of staff may differ depending on the purpose of the visit e.g., supply teacher, governor, external agency etc.). Upon arrival, visitors are provided with lanyards that contain information regarding the method for reporting concerns to the safeguarding team at the earliest opportunity.

The member of staff receiving the report will take an initial note of the concerns and will then make a formal record on the school's recording system and other relevant staff members will be alerted (usually the Head of Year). The Designated/Deputy Safeguarding Lead will seek advice from Statutory Services if the report is deemed urgent or if a child is considered at risk.

### **How our school will respond to reports of bullying**

At The South Wolds Academy and Sixth Form all reports of bullying or reported concerns of bullying behaviours will be taken seriously and investigated. Even if an incident is deemed 'not bullying' or a 'relational conflict', our school remains committed to supporting all students who have been involved and affected.

Our school keeps records of all reports of bullying, this information is stored on our school's recording system (My Concern). These records are used to identify trends and inform our school's preventative work. Information from these records is discussed regularly at staff meetings to ensure that all staff are kept up-to-date and are alert to any ongoing concerns.

Our staff use a contextual approach to safeguarding and each incident will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Some of our school's responses may include, but may not be limited to:

- Taking immediate action to ensure the safety of the victim and communicate with parent/carer
- Talk to all students involved in the reported incident – this may include the target, the alleged perpetrator, and any bystanders/witnesses
- Talk to the parents (of the target and/or the alleged perpetrator)



- Implement appropriate sanctions in accordance with our school's behaviour management policy. These sanctions will be graduated according to the seriousness of the incident but will send out a message that bullying is unacceptable
- Discuss the incident(s) with other agencies and organisations when appropriate and make referrals to those organisations when appropriate
- Liaise with the wider community if the bullying is taking place off the school premises. For example, Police Schools & Early Intervention Officer – Rushcliffe
- Keep in touch with the person who reported the incident/behaviour to inform them that action has been taken – this may include a student, a parent/carer/guardian, a member of staff or visitor, or another member of the school community. We will endeavour to ensure that all parties are kept informed of progress and any developments, but we will also need to show due regard to GDPR. This may mean, at times, that we are not able to provide or share information or updates.
- Implement a range of restorative practices, support or interventions appropriate to the situation (this may include informal or formal restorative work with the target and alleged perpetrator, solution-focused meetings, individual or group work with the target, individual or group work with the alleged perpetrator, individual or group work with any witnesses/bystanders, group work with the wider-school community etc.)
- Monitor the effectiveness of actions taken and reassess/take more actions if appropriate
- Liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead if there are safeguarding issues or concerns – a DSL may then refer to the Nottinghamshire MASH
- Refer to the Nottinghamshire County Council 'Pathways to Provision' document and complete an EHAF if appropriate

### **Strategies for preventing bullying**

At The South Wolds Academy and Sixth Form, we are committed to the safety and welfare of our students, and therefore we have developed the following strategies to promote friendly and positive behaviours and discourage bullying behaviours. Throughout the academic year, the effectiveness of these strategies is reviewed, and the variety of strategies may be expanded to address specific concerns or meet the needs of all members of our community.

The strategies we use include, but are not limited to:

- Whole school assemblies
- Active school council with representatives from each year group
- Peer mentoring schemes
- Taking part in Anti-Bullying week annually (November)
- Robust RSHE curriculum for all year groups
- Specific curriculum inputs for online safety and online bullying

- Drop down sessions to educate and promote healthy relationships, equality and tackle prejudice with input from external providers
- Opportunities for students to share their voice and opinions – through surveys, school council
- The tiered system of emotional health support including trained mentors and counselling for identified students
- Specific initiatives for identified individuals or groups
- [Parent and student information area](#) on the school website
- Regular staff training and development for all staff (including lunchtime supervisors)
- All staff model expected behaviour

### **Guidance for students**

Sometimes, it can be hard to know when bullying is happening, as the person bullying you might try to pass it off as ‘banter’ or messing around.

#### **If you are being bullied or harassed:**

- Remember it is not your fault
- Try to stay calm and look as confident as you can
- Be firm and clear – look them in the eye and, if possible, tell them to stop and tell them how you feel

#### **When you are talking to an adult about bullying, we would expect you to be clear about:**

- What has happened to you
- How often it has happened
- Who was involved
- Who saw what was happening
- Where it happened
- What you have done about it already

#### **If you experience bullying or harassment by mobile phone, text messages, social media or email, we expect you to:**

- Don't retaliate or reply
- Save the evidence – do not delete anything
- Make sure you tell an adult who you trust
- Contact your service provider or look at their website to see where to report incidents
- Be careful who you give your mobile phone number or email address to
- Make a note of exactly when a threatening message was sent
- Block the person who is bullying you.

### **Guidance for parents/carers**

Read the previous section: “*What is bullying and how does it differ to relational conflict*” so you understand the difference

#### **If your child has been bullied we would expect you to:**

- Calmly talk with your child about his/her experiences
- Make a note of what your child says including who was involved, how often the incidents have occurred, where it happened and what happened
- Reassure your child that he/she has done the right thing to tell you
- Explain to your child that he/she should report this to an adult in school immediately
- Let the Academy deal with the incident. Engaging directly with other parents can often exacerbate the situation making it more difficult to resolve.

#### **If talking with members of staff about bullying we would expect you to:**

- Be as specific as possible about what your child says has happened, give dates, places and names of other children involved
- Ask if there is anything you can do to help your child or the school
- Stay in touch with the school and let them know if things improve as well as if problems continue

#### **If your child is displaying bullying behaviour towards others, we would expect you to:**

- Talk with your child and explain that what he/she is doing is unacceptable and makes other children unhappy
- Support any sanction and following interventions the school undertakes
- Show your child how he/she can join in with other children without bullying
- Regularly check with your child how things are going at school
- Give your child lots of praise and encouragement when he/she is co-operative or kind to other people

#### **If your child is experiencing any form of online bullying, we would expect you to:**

- Ensure your child is careful whom they give their mobile phone number and email address to and who they are befriending through social media.
- Check exactly when a threatening message was sent and keep evidence of offending emails, text messages or online conversations. Do not delete messages
- Contact the school to report this
- Contact the service provider to report the incidents
- If the cyber bullying is serious and you believe there is a credible threat then contact the police using 101.

**The police advise removal of all social media for a period of time.**

Most social media apps require children to be at least 13 years of age. Further guidance can be found on the [CEOP website](#).

**Social media platforms have parental guides and reporting mechanisms for parents:**

Snapchat – [Parent's guide to Snapchat](#) and [Reporting Tool](#)

WhatsApp – [WhatsApp safety centre](#)

Instagram – [Teen accounts](#) and [Reporting tool](#)

Tik Tok – [Bullying prevention](#) and [Reporting Tool](#)

You Tube – [Reporting Tool](#)

**Breaches / Complaints:**

Breaches to this policy will be dealt with in the same way that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the Head teacher and Governing Body.

If a parent/carer is not satisfied with our school's actions, we ask that they follow our school's complaint policy and procedures. This is available online from our school website, and on request from the school office.

**Links with other policies:**

You may find it helpful to read this child-on-child abuse policy alongside the other following school policies:

<b>Policy</b>	<b>How it may link</b>
Child on Child Abuse policy	Includes links to bullying
EMET Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy	Includes information about child protection procedures and contextualised safeguarding
Behaviour Management Policy	Includes details about the school's behaviour system including potential sanctions for pupils
Anti-Bullying policy	Includes information about bullying behaviours and details about online bullying/cyberbullying and vulnerable groups
EMET Online Safety policy	Includes information about children's online behaviour

EMET Equality Policy	Includes information about our school's approach to tackling prejudice and celebrating differences. Links to prejudice-related language and crime and the protected characteristics
EMET RSE, Health and Mental Wellbeing policy	Includes information about our school's RSHE programme and how we teach about healthy relationships, friendships, and bullying
EMET Complaints Policy	Includes information about how to make a complaint if you are not satisfied with the school's response

**Further sources of support:**

**KIDSCAPE** is a website for parents and young people that provides practical support, and advice to challenge bullying and protect young lives.

Parent advice line: Call: 020 7823 5430 WhatsApp: 07496 682785

<https://www.kidscape.org.uk/>

**CHILDLINE:** Childline can be contacted 24/7. Calls to 0800 1111 are free and confidential. Children can also contact [Childline online](#).

Childline has lots of advice about [different types of bullying](#) and a tool to help children [bounce back from bullying](#).

**SAMARITANS:** You can access confidential emotional support at any time from Samaritans either by calling 116 123 or emailing [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)