Anti-Bullying Policy

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Contributors	Rob Arrowsmith		
Mandatory Policy	Yes		
Note	This policy must not be amended without prior approval of the Education Director		

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1. Supporting Documents

- Behaviour Policy (EDU.POL.027)
- Safeguarding Policy (EDE.POL.002)
- Mobile Phone Policy (EDU.POL.040) and Online Safety Policy (EDU.POL.009)
- Curriculum, SMSC and Fundamental British Values Policy (EDU.POL.008), and PSHE & RSHE Policy (EDE.POL.003)
- SEND Policy (EDU.POL.022)

Related policies are held within RADAR in the School's policy folder.

2. Introduction

At The Acres, every pupil has the right to learn and grow in a safe place, free from bullying. Many of our pupils have experienced trauma, exclusion or instability, and bullying can deepen those wounds. We are committed to challenging bullying in all its forms and to building a culture of respect, empathy, and inclusion.

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This policy sets out how we prevent bullying, how we respond when it happens, and how we support everyone involved. It is part of how we keep pupils safe and how we promote mutual respect and tolerance across the school.

3. Aim & Scope

This policy applies to all staff, governors, pupils, parents and carers, and visitors at The Acres. It aims to:

- Prevent bullying and build a culture of respect and inclusion.
- Make sure everyone can recognise bullying and knows how to report it.
- Respond quickly, fairly, and supportively when bullying happens.
- Support the pupil who has been bullied and help the pupil who has bullied to change their behaviour.
- Record, monitor and learn from bullying so our prevention keeps improving.

4. Abbreviations and Definitions

Bullying. Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another person physically or emotionally. It often involves a misuse of power. A one-off incident can also be serious and is dealt with under this policy.

Bullying can take many forms, including:

- Physical, for example hitting, kicking, or taking belongings.
- Verbal, for example name-calling, insults, or threats.
- Emotional or social, for example leaving someone out, humiliating them or spreading rumours.
- Prejudice-based, targeting race, religion, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or another characteristic.
- Cyberbullying, for example abuse, threats or exclusion through phones, messaging, social media, games, or other online platforms.

Child-on-child abuse. Some bullying is also child-on-child abuse and is dealt with through our safeguarding procedures. This includes sexual violence and sexual harassment, sexualised language, the sharing of nude or semi-nude images, misogyny and other prejudice, and the creation or sharing of AI-generated or faked sexual images, sometimes called deepfakes.

5. Policy Content

5.1 Principles and Approach

Our approach rests on the following principles.

Every pupil safe. No pupil should have to put up with bullying, and every report is taken seriously.

Relational and trauma informed. We understand behaviour as communication and respond in line with the Keys Connect model, using restorative approaches. We are

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clear that bullying is wrong, while supporting the pupil who has bullied to understand the harm and change, rather than labelling the child.

Positive norms. We use language that does not normalise harmful behaviour or stigmatise any group, and we model the respect we expect.

Partnership. We collaborate with pupils, families, and other agencies to keep pupils safe.

5.2 Anti-Bullying in Practice

Preventing bullying

- We build a culture of respect, inclusion, and positive relationships.
- We teach empathy, difference, and online safety through PSHE, relationships education and tutor time.
- We identify and supervise the times and places where bullying is more likely.
- We encourage pupils and staff to speak out, and we act when they do.

Recognising bullying

Staff stay alert to signs of bullying, for example a pupil becoming withdrawn or anxious, a change in mood or behaviour, unexplained injuries, a drop in attendance or progress, self-harm, or a pupil starting to bully others. Signs can be subtle in pupils with complex needs, so staff notice and ask.

Reporting bullying

Pupils can report bullying to any trusted adult, and we provide safe and accessible ways to report, including confidential reporting channels and, where appropriate, anonymous reporting mechanisms. We make sure pupils know how to report and that they will be listened to.

Responding to bullying

- We take every report seriously and act quickly.
- We support the pupil who has been bullied with reassurance and practical help.
- We address the behaviour of the pupil who has bullied through restorative conversations and, where needed, proportionate consequences.
- We stay connected with parents and carers, and we follow up to check the bullying has stopped.

Support and consequences.

Consequences are proportionate and aim to change behaviour. They may include restorative meetings, loss of privileges, increased supervision, and parental involvement, and as a last resort suspension in line with the Behaviour Policy (EDU.POL.027). We also provide support to both pupils, and we make a safeguarding referral or seek multi-agency help where it is needed.

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Cyberbullying and online bullying

We treat bullying through phones and online with the same seriousness as any other bullying. We collaborate with pupils and families to prevent it, respond to it, and keep evidence. Staff conduct relating to mobile phones and pupils' use of devices is addressed within the Mobile Phone and Online Safety policies (EDU.POL.009).

Bullying off-site and online

Bullying that happens away from school, including online and on the way to and from school, is treated with the same seriousness. We investigate and take appropriate action as far as is reasonable, and we collaborate with parents, carers and other agencies where needed.

Bullying as a safeguarding concern

Where bullying raises a safeguarding concern, including any child-on-child abuse, staff report it to the designated safeguarding lead immediately. It is recorded on CPOMS, risk assessments are reviewed, and we follow our Safeguarding policy (EDE.POL.002). Child-on-child abuse is never dismissed as banter or part of growing up.

5.3 Recording, Monitoring and Reporting

Bullying incidents are recorded on CPOMS, and the reporting form, restorative template and parent letter are held at School One Drive and ARBOR. Leaders analyse bullying data, including by pupil group such as pupils with SEND, to spot trends and target prevention, and report to the proprietor and governors.

5.4 Equality and Inclusion

At The Acres, this policy is applied fairly and without discrimination, in line with the Equality Act 2010. We robustly challenge prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying linked to any protected characteristic, and we monitor whether any group is more affected so we can act. Anti-bullying is one of the clearest ways we promote mutual respect and tolerance across the school.

Bullying incidents involving protected characteristics will be recorded and analysed separately to identify patterns, trends, and required actions.

6. Responsibilities

6.1 Pupils

Treat others with respect, speak out if they see or experience bullying, and support one another.

6.2 Staff

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Model respect, stay alert to the signs of bullying, act on every concern promptly, record incidents, and support both the pupil who has been bullied and the pupil who has bullied.

6.3 Leadership and the designated safeguarding lead

Leadership at The Acres makes sure this policy works in practice, that staff are trained, and that bullying data is analysed and acted on. The designated safeguarding lead leads on any bullying that is also a safeguarding concern.

6.4 Governance

The proprietor and governors at The Acres hold the school to account for an effective anti-bullying strategy and review the impact of this policy.

6.5 Parents and carers

Tell the school if they are worried about bullying, and work with the school to resolve it.

6.6 Named leads.

The designated safeguarding lead at The Acres is Jessica Howkins.

7. Training Requirements

All staff at The Acres are trained in recognising and responding to bullying, in trauma-informed and restorative practice, and in child-on-child abuse, with annual refreshers. Training is updated in response to emerging issues, for example cyberbullying, misogyny, and AI-generated images.

8. Equality Impact Statement

All policies will be developed and implemented in a manner that promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion, ensuring fair and equitable treatment for all individuals. Policies must align with relevant equality legislation and reflect the expectations and standards set by our regulatory bodies. They will demonstrate a commitment to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering an inclusive environment that respects and values the diverse needs, backgrounds, and experiences of those we support, as well as our workforce.

9. Sources of Information / References

This policy reflects current statutory guidance and legislation, including:

- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, standard 10, which requires an effective strategy to prevent bullying as far as reasonably practicable.
- Preventing and tackling bullying (DfE, 2017).
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025, and 2026 from 1 September 2026), including child-on-child abuse.

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- The Equality Act 2010, including prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying linked to protected characteristics.
- Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, including the power to regulate pupils' conduct beyond the school gate.
- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.
- The Online Safety Act 2023, relevant to online bullying and harms.

10. Version Control

This document can also be found in Radar. This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation or statutory guidance changes. The named owner for review at The Acres is the headteacher.

11. Appendices

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11.1 Appendix A: School-Specific Annex

Named Leads

Designated Safeguarding Lead - Jessica Howkins

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead - Michelle Carless

Anti-Bullying Lead – Jo Rawlinson (Deputy Head)

Bullying concerns may be reported directly to any member of staff, who will ensure the concern is passed to the relevant safeguarding or pastoral lead.

How Pupils Can Report Bullying

At The Acres, pupils can report bullying through:

- Speaking to any trusted member of staff.
- Speaking to their tutor.
- Speaking to the Pastoral Lead.
- Speaking to the DSL or safeguarding team.
- Writing concerns down and passing them to staff.
- Through parent/carer contact with school.
- Through restorative meetings and pastoral check-ins.
  Staff are reminded that low-level friendship issues may indicate wider bullying concerns and should be explored appropriately.

Recording and Monitoring

All bullying concerns are recorded on:

- Arbor.
- CPOMS where safeguarding concerns are identified.
- Behaviour and safeguarding tracking systems.

The following will be recorded:

- Type of bullying.
- Pupils involved.
- Location.
- Protected characteristics (where relevant).
- Actions taken.
- Outcomes.
- Follow-up monitoring.
  Leaders analyse bullying records half-termly to identify trends, hotspots and pupils requiring additional support.

Common Intervention Strategies Used at The Acres

Depending on the circumstances, intervention may include:

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- Restorative meetings.
- Individual pastoral support.
- Mentoring.
- Social skills interventions.
- Friendship support.
- Parent meetings.
- Behaviour support plans.
- Increased supervision.
- Safeguarding referral.
- External agency involvement.

  Support is provided both for pupils experiencing bullying and pupils displaying bullying behaviours.

Preventative Curriculum

The Acres actively promotes anti-bullying through:

- PSHE lessons.
- SMSC curriculum.
- Assemblies.
- Tutor sessions.
- Online safety education.
- Equality and diversity education.
- Anti-Bullying Week activities.
- Black History Month activities.
- Personal development curriculum.

  Themes are regularly revisited throughout the academic year to promote respect, tolerance, and positive relationships.

Pupil Voice

Pupil voice is gathered through:

- Pupil surveys.
- School council activities.
- Pastoral conversations.
- Review meetings.
- Safeguarding discussions where appropriate.

  Feedback is used to identify concerns and inform school improvement planning.

Bullying Hotspots

Leaders routinely review behaviour, safeguarding and pupil voice information to identify potential hotspots for bullying.
Additional monitoring may be undertaken in:

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- Social times.
- Transition periods.
- Community visits.
- Online environments.
  Staff deployment is adjusted where concerns are identified.

Quality Assurance

The effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying strategy is monitored through:

- Analysis of Arbor and CPOMS records.
- Pupil voice.
- Parent feedback.
- Behaviour and safeguarding trend meetings.
- Attendance data.
- Suspensions linked to bullying behaviours.
- Governor safeguarding reports.
  The Senior Leadership Team reviews bullying trends at least half-termly and implements additional support or interventions where required.

Bullying incidents and emerging themes are reviewed as part of The Acres' half-termly Behaviour, safeguarding and trends meetings, where leaders identify patterns, evaluate interventions and agree additional support where required.

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