

Thinking Schools Academy Trust

“Transforming Life Chances”

Plymouth High School for Girls

Anti Bullying Policy

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Revision Log (last 5 changes)

Date	Version No	Brief detail of change

1. Purpose and Scope

1.1 This policy sets out the school's approach to preventing, identifying and responding to bullying in all its forms. It is consistent with our responsibilities under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the Equality Act 2010, and the Department for Education's statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023).

1.2 This policy applies to all students, staff, parents, carers and governors at Plymouth High School for Girls (PHSG). It covers behaviour on school premises, online, and in contexts where student conduct outside school impacts on members of the school community.

1.3 We are committed to preventing and responding effectively to the bullying of protected and vulnerable groups of children including children:

- with disabilities
- with SEND
- who are, or are perceived to be, LGBTQ+
- of religious or ethnic minorities
- who are young carers
- who are looked after
- who might be targeted based on their appearance
- who might experience sexist or sexual bullying

2. Vision and Values

2.1 Our school motto, *Non scholae sed vitae discimus* (For life, not school, we learn), underpins our approach to promoting respectful relationships and a safe learning environment.

2.2 Bullying, in all its forms, is incompatible with our school values and our code of conduct. We believe that every student has the right to feel safe, valued and included.

2.3 PHSG is committed to a culture where bullying is never tolerated, where concerns are reported without fear, and where all members of our community actively uphold positive relationships.

3. Alignment

3.1 This policy supports the Trust Development Plan priority of Strong Policies and sits within the MADE framework, specifically the **Motivate** strand.

3.2 It also aligns with:

- The C-system behaviour framework
- Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
- Positive Behaviour policy

3.3 Bullying incidents will be addressed within the staged C-system, ensuring consistency, fairness and accountability, while safeguarding needs remain paramount.

4. Definition of Bullying

4.1 Bullying is defined as the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person by another. It can be physical, verbal, emotional or online.

4.2 Types of bullying include, but are not limited to:

- Physical bullying (hitting, kicking, taking belongings)
- Verbal bullying (name-calling, insults, threats)
- Social and relational bullying (spreading rumours, exclusion)
- Cyberbullying (harmful messages or posts, misuse of technology)
- Prejudice-based bullying (linked to protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010)
- Child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment or violence.

5. Aims

5.1 The aims of this policy are to:

- Prevent bullying through a culture of respect, inclusion and tolerance
- Ensure all students and staff know how to report bullying
- Ensure bullying concerns are taken seriously, investigated and resolved promptly
- Support both victims and those engaging in bullying behaviour to ensure positive outcomes
- Promote restorative approaches alongside proportionate consequences.

6. Procedures

6.1 Reporting:

- Any student who feels bullied (or witnesses bullying) must tell someone
- Reports may be made to a tutor, Head of Year, the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator, or directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Anonymous reporting options are available through the antibullying box
- Your tutor (or other adult) will talk with you and judge what action to take. In many cases they will deal with the issues themselves talking to the alleged bullies and parents as appropriate. The incident will be recorded in the 'bullying log'. In more sensitive cases the tutor or teacher will refer the incident on as described below
- An attempt will be made to help the bully(ies) change their behaviour
- The bully(ies) will be encouraged to apologise, but the co-ordinator, in consultation with senior leaders, will decide what other consequences will follow in any given situation

6.2 Recording and Investigation:

- All bullying incidents are logged on Arbor, using the appropriate C-rating.
- The Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator ensures investigations guarantee privacy, are thorough, sensitive and timely
- Victims are updated regularly and confidentiality is respected.

6.3 Sanctions (aligned to the C-system):

C1	Informal discussion with the Anti-Bullying Coordinator
C2	Receives a formal warning from the Anti-Bullying Coordinator
C4 HOY detention	Involved in a second bullying incident
	Retaliates against a student who has raised a complaint or concern about them or another
C5 SLT detention	Carries out child-on-child abuse
C6 Internal Exclusion	Involved in a third bullying incident or severe bullying behaviour
	Prejudicial or discriminatory actions or language, as described in the Equality Act 2010
	Verbal abuse/aggression/intimidating behaviour towards a student, member of staff or visitor
	Engage in uncontrolled or forceful physical conduct
C7 Suspension	Physical assault or fighting
	Stalking or harassing students or staff
	Found in possession of a weapon or item adapted or intended to cause harm or fear
C8 Permanent Exclusion	Significant act of aggression towards a member of the school community

6.4 Support:

- Victims are offered pastoral and, if needed, external agency support
- Students engaging in bullying are supported to change behaviour through restorative conversations, targeted mentoring, or referrals to wellbeing support
- We recognise that bullying can be both short term and long term, and we will, therefore, undertake to provide continuing support to a person for whom persistent bullying is perceived to be a problem.
- We recognise that bullying can happen on the way to school and on the way home and we encourage students to come forward if they witness or suffer bullying at these times

7. Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 The Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator acts as focal point for bullying concerns, ensuring all cases are investigated, recorded and followed up.

7.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) ensures safeguarding implications are identified, including child-on-child abuse, and referrals are made when necessary.

7.3 Heads of Year can monitor patterns of behaviour and liaise with parents if patterns emerge.

7.4 All staff are responsible for being vigilant to signs of bullying and responding in line with this policy.

7.5 Students are expected to contribute to a culture of respect, report concerns, and uphold the code of conduct.

8. Monitoring, Evaluation and Quality Assurance

8.1 The Senior Leadership Team will review bullying logs, student voice surveys, and pastoral data regularly.

8.2 The Governing body takes seriously its responsibility to ensure no person is the victim of bullying or harassment within these premises. Governors will receive annual updates on bullying incidents and actions taken.

8.3 The effectiveness of this policy will be measured by:

- Reduction in repeated bullying incidents
- Student and parent confidence in reporting systems
- Consistency of staff responses across the school.

9. Legal framework and external best practice

9.1 This policy is shaped by the school's statutory duties and established external best practice. It reflects current UK legislation and guidance relevant to bullying and child protection and draws on respected sector resources to inform operational practice.

9.2 Key statutory instruments and guidance considered in this policy include, but are not limited to:

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025**
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023**
- **Education and Inspections Act 2006** (section 89 and the headteacher's powers to regulate pupil behaviour off-site)
- **Equality Act 2010** (protected characteristics and the duty to prevent discrimination and harassment). –
- **Children Act 1989, 2004**
- **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006**
- **Protection of Freedoms Act 2012**
- **Children and Families Act 2014**
- **Education Act 2002**
- **Adoption and Children Act 2002, 2006**
- **Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003**
- **Sexual Offences Act 2003**
- **Children and Young Persons Act 2008**
- **Border, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009**
- **Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009**
- **Protection From Harassment Act 1997** and relevant criminal law (where behaviour amounts to harassment, stalking or criminal communication offences)
- **Malicious Communications Act 1988** and **Communications Act 2003** (relevant to harmful online communications)
- **Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015** (sharing private sexual images).

9.3 Where incidents amount to criminal behaviour (for example assault, sexual offences, hate crime, or distribution of sexual images), the school will consider reporting to the police and will work with statutory agencies in line with our safeguarding procedures.

9.4 The school also draws on sector best practice, including the Anti-Bullying Alliance and the Diana Award Anti-Bullying Programme. Principles adopted from these sources include:

- A whole-school approach that combines prevention, reporting, support and accountability
- Peer-led and student-voice initiatives, such as Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, to embed a culture of peer responsibility
- Clear reporting routes, timely investigation and proportionate responses that protect victims and hold perpetrators to account
- Use of restorative approaches alongside sanctions where appropriate to promote repair and behavioural change.

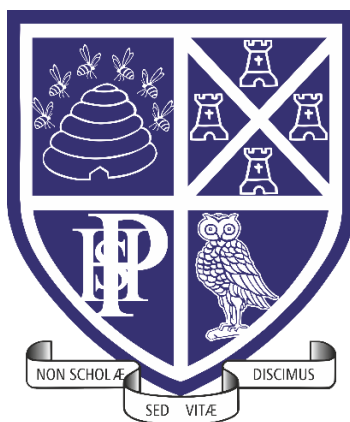
9.5 This section will be reviewed annually to ensure alignment with any changes in statutory guidance or recognised best practice.

10. Related Policies and Resources

10.1 This policy should be read alongside:

- C-system behaviour framework
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Equality Policy

11. Guidance for Parents and Carers



Parent and Carer Guidance:

Preventing and Responding to Bullying

Our commitment

At Plymouth High School for Girls, bullying of any kind is not tolerated. We work with students, families, and staff to ensure every child feels safe, respected, and able to learn. This commitment reflects our statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all students.

(Education Act 2002, Children Act 1989/2004, Education and Inspections Act 2006, Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2025)

Types and Forms of Bullying

Bullying can take many forms.

PHSG uses the national definition of bullying, endorsed by the Diana Award and the UK Government:
“Behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.”

Some common forms include:

Physical Bullying – Hitting, pushing, tripping, or damaging someone’s belongings.

Verbal Bullying – Name-calling, threats, teasing, or persistent hurtful comments.

Social or Relational Bullying – Excluding someone, spreading rumours, or manipulating friendships to cause harm.

Cyberbullying – Using digital devices and platforms such as social media, messaging apps, or online games to intimidate, embarrass, or isolate someone. This can include:

- Sending abusive messages or images
- Impersonating someone online to cause harm
- Excluding someone from online groups
- Sharing private information or images without consent
- Sexting or sharing intimate images

Understanding the difference: disagreements and bullying

It is important to distinguish between normal disagreements and bullying:

Normal disagreements: Children and young people sometimes argue, fall out with friends, or say things in the heat of the moment. These incidents are usually short-lived, not repeated, and often resolved by learning social skills such as apology, forgiveness, and compromise. Though they can be difficult to navigate and may be unpleasant or awkward, they are a normal part of growing up.

Bullying: This is different. Bullying is deliberate and repeated and intended to cause harm, whether physical, emotional, or social. It can target a child's identity (for example race, religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation), and can take place in person or online.

What parents and carers can do

Talk regularly: Check in with your child about their day, friends, and online activity. Listen without judgment and reassure them that they can come to you with problems.

Recognise early warning signs in your child:

- **For children who may be bullied,** look for changes in mood, withdrawal, reluctance to go to school, unexplained injuries or distress after using devices.
- **For children who may be bullying others,** monitor for aggression, taking pleasure in others' discomfort, frequent conflicts or secrecy around online activity

Teach social and emotional skills: Support your child in recognising bullying behaviours in others, but also in themselves, managing anger, and resolving disagreements peacefully. Discuss how words and actions affect others and practise empathy. Help your child understand personal responsibility for their actions and the importance of repairing harm.

Monitor interactions and online activity: Know who your child spends time with and where. This includes in-person and online. Insist on safe and supervised use of social media and messaging platforms and discuss how to respond to inappropriate content. Consider using parental tools:

- Most devices allow parents to track location, set screen time limits, app usage limits, and restrict downloads. Do not allow unrestricted mobile devices in bedrooms overnight. This will reduce exposure to harmful content, late-night messaging, and sleep disruption. A simple, low-cost alarm clock can be used instead of a phone alarm.
- Broadband and mobile providers offer filtering and blocking services.

Set clear boundaries:

- **Agree rules and expectations** for respectful behaviour, including their online behaviour, screen time, and the use of devices at night.
- **Take action when needed:** You may feel the need to issue age-appropriate and proportionate consequences when your child does not meet expectations. This might include restricting their free time or removing/restricting device use. This is not only appropriate but often effective when agreed as part of family boundaries.

Model respectful behaviour: Children learn most from what they see at home. Demonstrate respectful communication, empathy and conflict resolution at home. Highlight the importance of kindness and respect for others' differences.

Legal ages for common apps and platforms

Most social media platforms require users to be 13 or older, due to data protection law and child safety risks. These include TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, Discord, X and Facebook. Gaming platforms such as Roblox, Fortnite, PlayStation Network, and Xbox Live also have minimum age restrictions (usually 12–13). Insist that your child wait until they meet the minimum age before opening an account. Where younger children use apps, ensure strict supervision and privacy settings are in place.

School and parent responsibilities

In school: We will investigate and address bullying incidents that take place during the school day, on school premises, or when students are representing the school. We may also intervene where behaviour outside of school (including online) directly affects student safety or wellbeing in school.

Outside school: Parents and carers hold primary responsibility for managing behaviour that happens entirely outside school time and off school premises. This includes ensuring age-appropriate social media use at home. Schools have limited oversight in these cases.

Working together in partnership: Even where issues occur outside our direct responsibility, we will always listen, advise, and support families. We can provide guidance, mediate discussions, and signpost to external services, including the police, if appropriate.

Reporting bullying

- Encourage your child to report concerns quickly to you or to school staff.
- Contact the school if you believe your child is being bullied. We will always log, investigate, and act in line with our Anti-Bullying Policy.
- In serious cases we may involve safeguarding services or the police.

Support for parents

- NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000
- Parent Zone: parentzone.org.uk
- Childnet: childnet.com
- The Diana Award: antibullyingpro.com