Anti-Bullying Policy

January 2025

1. **Introduction and Purpose**

At The Coleshill School, we are committed to creating an environment where every student feels safe, supported, and empowered to thrive without fear. This policy outlines our approach to tackling bullying, ensuring all members of our community can enjoy and achieve every day.

Developed with guidance from the Anti-Bullying Alliance and the Department for Education's guidelines on Preventing and Tackling Bullying (2017), this document also draws from key research, including The Annual Bullying Survey (2017) and NSPCC's reports. We use insights from Childline to continually update and inform our practices, offering parents up-to-date advice and resources.

Our Praise and Behaviour Policy complements this by enabling the efficient tracking of positive and negative behaviours, fostering communication between staff, students, and families. By encouraging collaboration and proactive learning habits, we strive to build a harmonious school culture.

We understand the significant influence of social media on relationships and are dedicated to empowering students, parents, and staff to recognise, prevent, and address bullying effectively, both in-person and online.

2. Legal Responsibilities

Education and Inspections Act 2006

Schools must establish measures to promote good behaviour and prevent bullying. These must be included in the school's behaviour policy and shared with staff, students, and parents.

Children Act 1989

Bullying incidents may qualify as child protection issues if there is reasonable cause to believe a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. In such cases, concerns must be reported to local authority social care services. Even when safeguarding concerns are absent, external support may be needed to assist victims and address underlying causes of bullying.

Equality Act 2010

This Act consolidates anti-discrimination laws, requiring schools to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.

- Promote equal opportunities and foster positive relationships between individuals with and without protected characteristics.

Education Act 2011

This legislation empowers teachers to tackle cyberbullying by allowing searches and, if necessary, deletion of inappropriate content on electronic devices.

While bullying itself is not a defined criminal offence, some actions—such as harassment or malicious communication—may constitute criminal behaviour under UK law. Schools may need to involve the police for serious incidents.

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3. Understanding Bullying

The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) defines bullying as:

"The repeated, intentional harm caused to an individual or group where there is an imbalance of power. This can be physical, verbal, psychological, or occur via digital platforms."

Bullying typically involves repetitive harmful behaviour, whether physical aggression, verbal abuse, or the destruction of property. It can also manifest as:

- **Cyberbullying:** Using technology such as social media, texts, or emails to harm others.

- **Physical or Verbal Harassment:** Including racial, sexual, or other targeted abuse.

The 2014 DfES Cyber bullying guidance for Head teachers and school staff states: "All forms of bullying (including cyberbullying) should be handled as a community issue for the whole school. It is important that schools take measures to prevent and tackle bullying among pupils. But it is equally important that schools make it clear that bullying of staff, whether by pupils, parents or colleagues, is unacceptable. Evidence indicates that one in five (21%) teachers have reported having derogatory comments posted about them on social media sites from both parents and children. School leaders, teachers, school staff, parents and pupils all have rights and responsibilities in relation to cyberbullying and should work together to create an environment in which pupils can learn and develop and staff can have fulfilling careers free from harassment and bullying".

Using recommendations from the 2016 Anti-bullying alliance Achievement for All programme we aim to reduce the bullying of all students including disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs.

- Bullying may start from an individual or from a gang.
- Girls and boys are equally involved in bullying/being bullied.
- Bullying occurs more frequently when there is less teacher supervision, before or after school, during break and lunch-hour, in toilets, PE changing rooms.
- Students being bullied tend to be isolated, anxious, feel inadequate, and are unable to make and maintain friendships and have a low self-image.

- Most bullying is hidden from teachers; they may be the last to learn about incidents of bullying taking place in their own environment.
- Bullying may occur from older to younger students, or within a year group. Bear in mind it may occur from adults to children, or even children to adults.

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4. Strategies to Combat Bullying

A unified staff approach is crucial in tackling bullying effectively.

All staff members should be vigilant in identifying and addressing instances of bullying, no matter how minor or severe they may seem. It is important for staff to ensure their conduct is exemplary and beyond reproach.

Both teaching and support staff should remain observant and proactive throughout the school, paying special attention to secluded areas and students who may be vulnerable. Staff on duty need to focus on locations where bullying is more likely to occur, such as restrooms, quiet hallways, and less frequented spaces. Non-teaching staff must also be informed and equipped to respond to any incidents involving negative behaviour or language directed at students or colleagues.

Students must understand that the school has a zero-tolerance policy toward bullying and that all reported cases will be taken seriously, addressed, and thoroughly investigated. It is essential for both students and parents to feel confident about reporting concerns and to be informed about how these will be handled.

Staff members, including tutors and support teams, should be attentive to signs such as stress, anxiety, a decline in academic performance, conflicts within peer groups, absenteeism, reliance on adult supervision during school hours, or any unusual behaviour.

Students will receive consistent guidance on how they can easily access Student Support to report bullying or raise concerns about friendships and relationships. Families will be kept informed about any issues regarding their child's social interactions or online safety. Mediation services will be provided by Student Support when appropriate.

Through the PSHE program, students will learn about tolerance, respect for human rights, and the importance of awareness. Opportunities will be created for reflection on the effects of local and global events on communities. We aim to foster an environment where students and staff celebrate diversity and value differences, helping to prevent prejudice and discrimination in school and beyond.

PSHE lessons, tutor programs, and assemblies will address topics such as friendships, online safety, relationships, and the consequences of bullying and discrimination. Students will also be educated about the potential impact of actions such as banter, teasing, and bullying, ensuring they understand how their behaviour may be perceived by others.

5. Consequences and Support

Parents and carers must be informed of any concerns regarding bullying involving their child.

Students should be encouraged to openly discuss incidents of bullying. This should not be viewed as "snitching" but rather as contributing to a positive and supportive school environment for everyone.

When a student exhibiting bullying behaviour is identified, it is important for teachers to avoid overreacting with excessive shouting or harsh punishments, as this may unintentionally reinforce the aggressive attitudes typically associated with bullying.

When suitable, a peer-focused approach can be employed, such as peer mentoring or mediation. It is essential to ensure that every child involved has an advocate throughout the process.

For cases of persistent bullying, the matter will be escalated to the pastoral team, who will determine an appropriate course of action and consequences.

In certain situations, a mediation involving both the individual exhibiting bullying behaviour and the victim, can prove effective in resolving conflicts.

6. Communication

All instances of discrimination must be recorded and documented. This includes any incidents involving racist, religious, sexist, or homo/bi/transphobic language or behaviour.

The school will follow the recommendations of the Anti-Bullying Alliance by:

- Ensuring the safety and well-being of the individual targeted.

- Addressing the attitudes and values that contribute to the behaviours in question.

- Engaging additional support or expert knowledge when necessary.

All tutors and teachers are responsible for reporting bullying incidents which must be logged on MyConcern by a Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The pastoral team must:

- Maintain a detailed record of bullying incidents, including how each case is addressed and the consequences for those involved in bullying.

- Monitor victims of bullying to support and ensure no further occurrences take place and take prompt action if new incidents arise.

- Communicate incidents to parents and teachers to ensure everyone remains vigilant and proactive in monitoring.

- Keep a log of sanctions imposed and monitor patterns or repeat behaviours to inform future support or interventions.

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7. Counselling and Reflection

Perpetrators are guided to reflect on their actions and understand the harm caused. Victims, perpetrators, and peers are supported through pastoral teams to rebuild trust and promote positive relationships.

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8. Promoting Awareness

Our curriculum incorporates lessons on building healthy relationships, understanding diversity, and addressing discrimination. Awareness campaigns, posters, assemblies and the tutor programme further reinforce these messages throughout the school.

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9. Role of Parents

Parents are vital partners in addressing bullying. They are encouraged to:

- Listen and take their child's concerns seriously.

- Report any fears to the school promptly.

- Support their child in attending support sessions if required.

Parents are regularly informed about our anti-bullying policy and practices, ensuring they feel confident in our approach.

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10. Looking Ahead

Prevention remains our priority. Regular staff training and policy reviews ensure we stay responsive to evolving challenges. Our vision is a school community where every member feels valued, safe, and supported.

The Law

Certain forms of bullying are considered illegal and must be reported to the police. These include:

- **Violence or assault.**

- **Theft.**

- **Repeated harassment or intimidation,** such as name-calling, threats, or abusive phone calls, emails, or text messages.

- **Hate crimes.**

If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call 999.

Schools and the Law

By law, all state schools must have a Behaviour Policy that includes measures to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils. This policy must be clearly communicated to teachers, students, and parents.

Anti-Discrimination Law

Schools are also required to follow anti-discrimination laws, ensuring staff act to prevent discrimination, harassment, and victimisation within the school. This is applicable to schools in England, Wales, and most schools in Scotland. Different legislation applies in Northern Ireland.

Reporting Bullying

Bullying should first be reported to the school or a trusted individual if it occurs outside the school environment, such as in a club or online. In cases where bullying involves a crime, it should be reported to the police.

Police Reporting

For incidents involving cyberbullying, it is important to keep records, including dates, times, and any messages received. Do not delete any evidence. While anyone can report bullying to the police, it is usually advisable to address the issue through the school first.