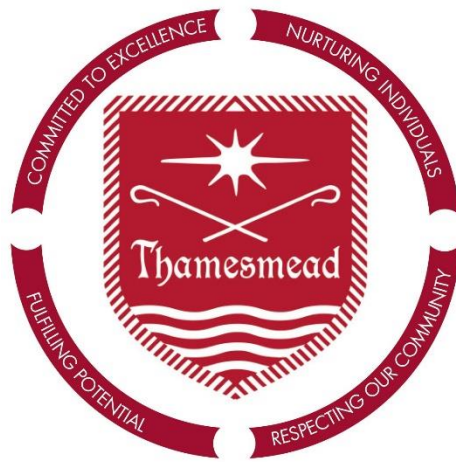# THAMESMEAD SCHOOL

Anti-Bullying Policy

Person responsible	Mr P Watson
Governors Committee	Personal Development Behaviour and Welfare
Review Period	Annually
Date of review	Spring term 2024
Date of next review	Spring term 2025

Contents

This policy is based on the following guidance:

- [Preventing and Tackling Bullying 2017](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#)
- [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges 2021](#)
- [Childnet's Cyberbullying: Understand, Prevent and Respond: Guidance for Schools](#)

1. Policy objectives

- This policy outlines what Thamesmead School will do to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying
- The policy has been adopted with the involvement of the whole school community
- Thamesmead School is committed to developing an anti-bullying culture where the bullying of adults, children or young people is not tolerated in any form

2. Links to legislation

There are several pieces of legislation which set out measures and actions for schools in response to bullying, as well as criminal and civil law. These include (but are not limited to):
- The Education and Inspection Act 2006, 2011
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Children Act 1989
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- The Computer Misuse Act 1990

3. School values and ethos

Thamesmead School is committed to the core values of Aspiration, Respect, Community, Independence, Confidence, Commitment and Resilience. As such actions taken to prevent bullying and responses taken to incidences of bullying are essential in fostering these values.

The Thamesmead School community recognises that all forms of bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals; it can create a barrier to learning and have serious consequences for mental wellbeing.

By effectively preventing and tackling bullying our school can help to create a safe and disciplined environment, where students are able to learn and fulfil their potential.

Our Community:
- Monitors and reviews our anti-bullying policy and practice on a regular basis.

- Supports staff to promote positive relationships to help prevent bullying.
- Recognises that some members of our community may be more vulnerable to bullying and its impact than others; this may include children with SEND and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Being aware of this will help us to develop effective strategies to prevent bullying from happening and provide appropriate support, if required.
- Will intervene by identifying and tackling bullying behaviour appropriately and promptly.
- Ensures our students are aware that bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively; that everyone should feel safe to learn and abide by the anti-bullying policy.
- Requires all members of the community to work with the school to uphold the anti-bullying policy.
- Recognises the potential impact of bullying on the wider family of those affected, so will work in partnership with parents/carers regarding all reported bullying concerns and will seek to keep them informed at all stages.
- Will deal promptly with grievances regarding the school response to bullying in line with our complaints policy.
- Seeks to learn from good anti-bullying practice elsewhere.
- Utilises support from the Local Authority and other relevant organisations when appropriate.

4. Safeguarding at Thamesmead School

Thamesmead School places the safety and welfare of our students at the heart of the school's culture and ethos.

We recognise that for our students having high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends, and clear lines of communication with a trusted adult helps to prevent abuse. School staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse.

We believe:

- All children have the right to be protected from harm regardless of their heritage, religion, ethnicity, ability, gender, or sexuality.
- Children need to be safe and to feel safe in school.
- That as a school we can contribute to the prevention of abuse.
- Children need support which matches their individual needs, including those who may have experienced abuse.
- Safeguarding issues could arise at any point in the school day, term, or year on site, off site, in school or at home. Staff will be always alert to these issues.

The overarching objective of our safeguarding strategy is to prevent harm or, where harm does occur, to prevent it from getting any worse. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility at Thamesmead School. We will keep students safe by:

- Establishing and maintaining an environment where students feel safe and secure and are encouraged to talk and are listened to.

- Ensuring that students know that there are adults within the school who they can approach if they are worried, are in difficulty or concerned about one of their peers or a family member.
- Including within the PSHE curriculum, relevant content, activities, and opportunities that will equip students with the skills they need to recognise abuse especially acts of grooming including online.
- Ensuring that, wherever possible, every effort is made to establish working relationships with families and with colleagues from other agencies. It is important to note that data protection is not a barrier to information-sharing in relation to potential safeguarding concerns (risk of sharing verses risk of not sharing).
- Identifying young people who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm and taking appropriate action with the aim of making sure that they are kept safe both at home and at school.

The school recognises the need to train all staff to be aware of signs, symptoms, and categories of abuse and how to deal with a disclosure of abuse. This will take place on a yearly basis as a minimum and more regularly during twilight training sessions via emails and e-bulletins.

5. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of:
- **All staff**, including: governors, senior leadership, teaching and support staff, to support, uphold and implement this policy accordingly.
- **Students** to abide by the policy and support the ethos of the school. This includes reporting to an adult when someone is being bullied or is in distress.
- **Parents/carers** to support their children and work in partnership with the school. This includes sharing any concerns they have with their son/daughter with their peers or school staff.
- **The Headteacher** to communicate this policy to the school community, to ensure that disciplinary measures are applied fairly, consistently and reasonably, and that a member of the senior leadership team has been identified to take overall responsibility.
- **The Governing Body** will take a lead role in monitoring and reviewing this policy.

6. Definition of bullying

- Bullying can be defined as "behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally". (DfE "Preventing and Tackling Bullying", July 2017)
- Bullying can include name calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; taking belongings; producing offensive graffiti; gossiping; excluding people from groups and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.

- This includes the same unacceptable behaviours expressed online, sometimes called online or cyberbullying. This can include: sending offensive, upsetting and inappropriate messages / images by phone, text, instant messages, through gaming, websites, social media sites and apps, and sending offensive or degrading photos or videos.
- Bullying is recognised by the school as being a form of peer on peer abuse. It can be emotionally abusive and can cause severe and adverse effects on children's emotional development.

7. Forms of bullying covered by this policy

Bullying can happen to anyone. This policy covers all types and forms of bullying including:

- Bullying related to physical appearance
- Bullying of young carers, children in care or otherwise related to home circumstances
- Bullying related to physical/mental health conditions
- Physical bullying or emotional bullying
- Sexual bullying
  - Sexual comments
  - Sexual jokes or taunting
  - Physical behaviour like interfering with clothes
  - Online sexual harassment such as unwanted sexual comments and messages (including on social media), sharing of nude or semi-nude images and/or videos, or sharing of unwanted explicit content
- Bullying via technology, known as online or cyberbullying
- Prejudicial bullying (against people/students with protected characteristics):
  - Bullying related to race, religion, faith and belief and for those without faith
  - Bullying related to ethnicity, nationality or culture
  - Bullying related to Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)
  - Bullying related to sexual orientation (homophobic/biphobic bullying)
  - Gender based bullying, including transphobic bullying
  - Bullying against teenage parents (pregnancy and maternity under the Equality Act, 2010)
  - Bullying aimed at biological or genetic appearance, such as hair colour.

Other incidents of bullying might also include:
- The same person or group always leaves someone out or shuns them.
- Someone makes threats of violence against someone else.
- Someone damages someone else's kit or clothing deliberately.
- Someone takes someone else's belongings deliberately.
- Someone tries to force someone else to do something they do not want to do.
- Someone tries to force another to do something sexual they do not want to do.

Although all of these actions are serious and the school will always intervene, they may not always be regarded as bullying unless they are part of an on-going pattern of behaviour against the victim.

7.1 Bullying outside school

All students are expected to follow the school's rules during the school day (including the duration of school trips and visits) and when travelling to and from school. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives Headteachers the power to regulate students' conduct when they are not on the school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff.

This can relate to incidents of bullying occurring off the school premises, such as public transport, outside local shops or within the local community. Sanctions, including fixed and permanent exclusions, may be applied by the school where a student has misbehaved outside school.

8. Responding to bullying

The following steps may be taken when dealing with all incidents of bullying reported to the school:
- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached or witnessed the concern.
- The school will provide appropriate support for the person being bullied – making sure they are not at risk of immediate harm and will involve them in any decision making, as appropriate.
- A member of The Senior Leadership Team / Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) / Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) / Head of Year or another senior member of staff will interview all parties involved.
- The DSL and Safeguarding Team will be informed of all bullying issues where there are safeguarding concerns.
- The school will speak with and inform other staff members, where appropriate.
- The school will ensure parents/carers are kept informed about the concern and action taken, as appropriate and in line with child protection and confidentially policies.
- Sanctions, as identified within the school behaviour for learning policy, and support will be implemented in consultation with all parties concerned.
- If necessary, other agencies may be consulted or involved, such as the police, if a criminal offence has been committed, or other local services including Early Help or Children's Services, if a child is felt to be at risk of significant harm.
- Where the bullying of or by students takes place off school site or outside of normal school hours (including cyberbullying), the school will ensure that the concern is fully investigated. If required, the DSL and DDSLs will collaborate with other schools. Appropriate action will be taken, including providing support and implementing sanctions in school in accordance with this policy and the school's behaviour policy.

- A clear and precise account of bullying incidents will be recorded by the school in accordance with existing procedures. This will include recording appropriate details regarding decisions and action taken.
- Support and interventions will be put in place to support the victim and correct the behaviours or the offender(s). This will be communicated to the students and their parents. (Refer to section 8.2)

8.2 Cyberbullying

When responding to cyberbullying concerns, the school will:
- Act as soon as an incident has been reported or identified.
- Provide appropriate support for the person who has been cyberbullied and work with the person who has carried out the bullying to ensure that it does not happen again.
- Encourage the person being bullied to keep any evidence (screenshots) of the bullying activity to assist any investigation (explicit images will not be viewed by staff and will be handed to the police for investigation).
- Take all available steps where possible to identify the person responsible. This may include:
  - looking at the use of the school IT systems;
  - identifying and interviewing possible witnesses;
  - Contacting the service provider and the police, if necessary.
- Work with the individuals and online service providers to prevent the incident from spreading and assist in removing offensive or upsetting material from circulation. This may include:
  - Supporting reports to a service provider to remove content if those involved are unable to be identified or if those involved refuse to or are unable to delete content.
  - Confiscating and searching students' electronic devices, such as mobile phones, in accordance with the law, DfE guidance on 'Searching, screening and confiscation at school' and the school searching and confiscation policy.
  - Requesting the deletion of locally-held content and content posted online if they contravene school behavioural policies.
- Ensure that sanctions are applied to the person responsible for the cyberbullying; the school will take steps to change the attitude and behaviour of the bully, as well as ensuring access to any additional help that they may need.
- Inform the police if a criminal offence has been committed.
- Provide information to staff and students regarding steps they can take to protect themselves online. This may include:
  - advising those targeted not to retaliate or reply;
  - providing advice on blocking or removing people from contact lists;
  - helping those involved to think carefully about what private information they may have in the public domain.

8.2.i Generative artificial intelligence (AI)

- Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, students and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Bard.

- There is a recognition that AI has many uses to help pupils learn. However, it may also have the potential to be used to bully others. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.

8.3 Supporting students.

Students who have been bullied will be supported by:
- Reassuring the student and providing continuous pastoral support.
- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with their teacher, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL), or a member of staff of their choice.
- Being advised to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to concerns and build resilience as appropriate.
- Working towards restoring self-esteem and confidence.
- Providing ongoing support; this may include: working and speaking with staff, offering formal mentoring, engaging with parents and carers.
- Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance; this could include support through Early Help or Specialist Children's Services, or support through the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

Students who have perpetrated bullying will be helped by:
- Discussing what happened, establishing the reasons for bullying and the need to change.
- Informing parents/carers to help change the attitude and behaviour of the child.
- Providing appropriate education and support regarding their behaviour or actions.
- If online, requesting that content be removed and reporting accounts/content to service provider.
- Sanctioning, in line with school behaviour for learning policy; this may include formal warnings, detentions, removal of privileges (including online access when encountering cyberbullying concerns), and fixed-term or permanent exclusions.
- Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance; this may include involvement from the Police or referrals to Early Help, Specialist Children's Services, or the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

8.4 Disciplinary actions in response to incidents of bullying:

The following actions may be taken
- Official warning to cease offending
- Meetings with parents and school leaders
- Restorative meetings
- Exclusion from certain areas of the school premises or certain activities
- Detentions
- Lunch time referral
- Internal exclusion from the school community
- External fixed period exclusion from the school
- Permanent exclusion from the school
- Referral to senior staff and/or external agencies e.g. Education Welfare Officer, Police Liaison Officer.

8.5 Supporting adults

Our school takes measures to prevent and tackle bullying among students; however, it is equally important to recognise that bullying of adults, including staff and parents, whether by students, parents or other staff members, is unacceptable.

Adults who have been bullied or affected will be supported by:
- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the concern with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), a senior member of staff and/or the Headteacher.
- Advising them to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to concerns and build resilience, as appropriate.
- Where the bullying takes place off school site or outside of normal school hours (including online), the school will still investigate the concern and ensure that appropriate action is taken in accordance with the schools' behaviour and discipline policy.
- Reporting offensive or upsetting content and/or accounts to the service provider, where the bullying has occurred online.
- Reassuring and offering appropriate support.
- Working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance.

Adults who have perpetrated the bullying will be helped by:
- Discussing what happened with a senior member of staff and/or the Headteacher to establish the concern.

- Establishing whether a legitimate grievance or concern has been raised and signposting to the school's official complaints procedures.
- If online, requesting that content be removed.
- Instigating disciplinary, civil or legal action as appropriate or required.

8.6 Allegations against staff

Thamesmead School believes that all members of the school community are entitled to be protected from bullying. Inappropriate behaviour between students or staff will not be tolerated and any concerns or allegations of impropriety will be dealt with quickly, fairly and sensitively through the Staff Grievance Policy. Any staff disclosing information, regarding inappropriate behaviour by colleagues, will be listened to and supported by the senior leadership team in line with the 'Whistle Blowing Policy'.

9. Preventing bullying

9.1 Environment

The whole school community will:
- Create and support an inclusive environment which promotes a culture of mutual respect, consideration and care for others, which will be upheld by all.
- Recognise that bullying can be perpetrated or experienced by any member of the community, including adults and children (peer on peer abuse).
- Recognises the potential for children with SEND to be disproportionally impacted by bullying and will implement additional pastoral support as required.
- Openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as: children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities, religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related difference.
- Challenge practice and language (including 'banter') which does not uphold the school values of tolerance, non-discrimination and respect towards others.
- Be encouraged to use technology, especially mobile phones and social media, positively and responsibly.
- Work with staff, the wider community and outside agencies to prevent and tackle concerns including all forms of prejudice-driven bullying.
- Actively create "safe spaces" for vulnerable children and young people.
- Celebrate success and achievements to promote and build a positive school ethos.
- Student leaders and student voice will be used to gather feedback and information

9.2 Policy and Support

The whole school community will:
- Provide a range of approaches for students, staff and parents/carers to access support and report concerns.
- Regularly update and evaluate our practice to consider the developments of technology and provide up-to-date advice and education to all members of the community regarding positive online behaviour.
- Take appropriate, proportionate and reasonable action, in line with existing school policies, for any bullying brought to the schools' attention, which involves or effects students, even when they are not on school premises; for example, when using school transport or online, etc.
- Implement appropriate disciplinary sanctions; the consequences of bullying will reflect the seriousness of the incident, so that others see that bullying is unacceptable.
- Use a variety of techniques to resolve the issues between those who bully, and those who have been bullied.

9.3 Education and Training

The school community will:
- Train all staff, including: teaching staff, support staff (e.g. administration staff, teaching assistants and site staff) and pastoral staff, to identify all forms of bullying and take appropriate action, following the school's policy and procedures, including recording and reporting incidents.
- Consider a range of opportunities and approaches for addressing bullying throughout the curriculum and other activities, such as: through displays, assemblies, peer support, the school/student council, etc.
- Collaborate with other local educational settings as appropriate, and during key times of the year, for example during transition.
- Ensure anti-bullying has a high profile throughout the year, reinforced through key opportunities such as assemblies, citizenship and anti-bullying events.
- Provide systematic opportunities to develop students' social and emotional skills, including building their resilience and self-esteem.

10. Involvement of students

We will:
- Involve students in policy writing and decision making, to ensure that they understand the school's approach and are clear about the part they play in preventing bullying.

- Regularly canvas children and young people's views on the extent and nature of bullying.
- Ensure that all students know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying.
- Ensure that all students are aware of the range of sanctions which may be applied against those engaging in bullying.
- Involve students in anti-bullying campaigns in school and embedded messages in the wider school curriculum.
- Utilise student voice in providing student led education and support.
- Publicise the details of internal support, as well as external helplines and websites.
- Offer support to students who have been bullied and to those who are bullying to address the problems they have.

11. Involvement and partnership with parents and carers

We will:
- Take steps to involve parents and carers in developing policies and procedures, to ensure they are aware that the school does not tolerate any form of bullying.
- Make sure that key information about bullying (including policies and named points of contact) is available to parents/carers in a variety of formats, including via the school website.
- Ensure all parents/carers know who to contact if they are worried about bullying and where to access independent advice.
- Work with all parents/carers and the local community to address issues beyond the school gates that give rise to bullying.
- Ensure that parents work with the school to role model positive behaviour for students, both on and offline.
- Ensure all parents/carers know about our complaints procedure and how to use it effectively, to raise concerns in an appropriate manner.

12. Monitoring and review: Putting policy into practice

- The school will ensure that they regularly monitor and evaluate mechanisms to ensure that the policy is being consistently applied.
- Any issues identified will be incorporated into the school's action planning.
- The Headteacher will be informed of bullying concerns, as appropriate.
- The Personal Development Behaviour and Welfare Committee discuss and report incidents of bullying, including outcomes on a regular basis.

13. Links with other school policies and practices

This Policy links with a number of other school policies, practices and action plans including:

- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- CCTV Policy
- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Complaints procedure
- Confidentiality policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Curriculum programmes of study, such as: PSHE, Citizenship and Computer Science
- Educational Visits Policy
- Equality Policy and Objectives
- Exclusions Policy
- Staff Grievance Policy
- Mobile phone and social media guidance within Uniform and Behaviour Policies
- Online safety policy and Trusted Device Policy
- Child on Child Abuse Policy
- Personal Development Policy
- SEND Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

14. Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and following any concerns and/or updates to national/local guidance or procedures.

Appendix 1: Additional Guidance for staff

Dealing with Incidents of bullying

The following steps may be taken when dealing with incidents:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident should be reported immediately by the member of staff who has been approached. A clear and precise account of the incident must be recorded and given to the Head of Year / Curriculum Leader / Subject Leader with a copy PCS team.
- The Head of Year/curriculum leader will arrange for the interview of all concerned (using on-call where necessary) and will record the incident, copying Wendy Shipman in the PCS team.
- Teachers/ tutors will be kept informed.
- When responding to cyberbullying concerns the school will take all available steps to identify the bully, including looking at the school systems, identifying and interviewing possible witnesses, and contacting the police, if necessary.
- Where the bullying takes place on the way to or from school or during school led activities, e.g. educational visits, sports fixtures, then the school will ensure that the concern is investigated and that appropriate action is taken in accordance with the school's behaviour and discipline policy.
- Parents/carers will be kept informed.
- Sanctions will be used as appropriate and in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.
- If necessary and appropriate, the police or other local services will be consulted.

Appendix 2: Useful links and supporting organisations

- Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- Beat Bullying: www.beatbullying.org
- Childline: www.childline.org.uk
- DfE: "Preventing and Tackling Bullying. Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies", and "Supporting children and young people who are bullied: advice for schools" March 2014: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying
- DfE: "No health without mental health": https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/no-health-without-mental-health-a-cross-government-outcomes-strategy
- Family Lives: www.familylives.org.uk
- Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk
- MindEd: www.minded.org.uk

- NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk
- PSHE Association: www.pshe-association.org.uk
- Restorative Justice Council: www.restorativejustice.org.uk
- The Diana Award: www.diana-award.org.uk
- Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk
- Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk
- Young Carers: www.youngcarers.net

Cyberbullying
- Childnet International: www.childnet.com
- Digizen: www.digizen.org
- Internet Watch Foundation: www.iwf.org.uk
- Think U Know: www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk

LGBTQ
- EACH: www.eachaction.org.uk
- Pace: www.pacehealth.org.uk
- Schools Out: www.schools-out.org.uk
- Stonewall: www.stonewall.org.uk

SEND
- Changing Faces: www.changingfaces.org.uk
- Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk
- DfE: SEND code of practice:
  https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25

Racism and Hate
- Anne Frank Trust: www.annefrank.org.uk
- Kick it Out: www.kickitout.org
- Report it: www.report-it.org.uk
- Stop Hate: www.stophateuk.org
- Show Racism the Red Card: www.srtrc.org/educational