GEORGE ABBOT SCHOOL

Policy Title:	**Anti-Bullying Policy**
Author:	**Designated Safeguarding Lead**
Date of most recent review:	**Summer 2026**
Date of next review:	**Summer 2027**
School Mission Statement: Academic excellence within a strong community of equality and respect, where potential and opportunity are realised.	

This policy is based on *Preventing and Tackling Bullying* (DfE, July 2023) and supporting documents. It also takes into account the statutory guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE, 2021). The school has read Childnet's *Cyberbullying: Understand, Prevent and Respond: Guidance for Schools* (https://www.childnet.com/resources/cyberbullying-guidance-for-schools).

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

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

- Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Equality Policy
- E-safety
- Staff Code of Conduct

Links to legislation
There are a number of pieces of legislation which set out measures and actions for schools in response to bullying, as well as criminal and civil law. These may include (but are not limited to):

- The Education and Inspection Act 2006, 2011
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Children Act 1989
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (if appropriate)
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- Department for Education Advice https://www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school

Responsibilities
It is the responsibility of:

- The Senior Leadership Team to communicate this policy to the school community, to ensure that disciplinary measures are applied fairly, consistently and reasonably.
- School Governors to take a lead role in monitoring and reviewing this policy.
- All staff, including: governors, senior leadership, teaching and non-teaching staff, to support, uphold and

implement this policy accordingly.
- Parents/carers to support their children and work in partnership with the school.

Definition of bullying
- Bullying is "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 by phone, text, instant messenger, through gaming, websites, social media sites and apps, and sending offensive or degrading photos or videos.
- Bullying can be a form of **child on child** abuse and can be emotionally abusive; it can cause severe and adverse effects on children's emotional development.
- Some forms of bullying are illegal and should be reported to the police. These include:
    - Violence or assault
    - Hate crimes
    - Theft
    - Repeated harassment or intimidation, for example name calling, threats and abusive phone calls, emails or text messages

Forms of bullying covered by this policy
Bullying can happen to anyone. This policy covers all types of bullying including:
- Bullying related to race, religion, nationality or culture.
- Bullying related to SEND (Special Educational Needs or Disability).
- Bullying related to appearance or physical/mental health conditions.
- Bullying related to sexual orientation (homophobic bullying).
- Bullying of young carers, children in care or otherwise related to home circumstances.
- Sexist, sexual and transphobic bullying.
- Bullying via technology, known as online or cyberbullying.

School Ethos
George Abbot community recognises that bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a significantly detrimental 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 safe, disciplined environment, where students are able to learn and fulfil their potential.

George Abbot School is committed to the philosophy and practice of inclusion. We are guided by our vision and aims of respect to others which sits alongside the school motto 'Not for oneself, but for others' and the school mission statement.

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 member of staff will record the incident and inform the appropriate pastoral or safeguarding lead
- 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.
- If the situation is deemed serious enough, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), DDSLs or another member of the Senior Leadership Team will interview all parties involved otherwise this will be carried out by the Head of Year or Inclusion Manager.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) or another member of the Senior Leadership Team will meet with the students involved if investigations have determined bullying
- Senior Leaders will record the incident as bullying on an appropriate log.
- The DSL or DDSL will be informed of all bullying issues where there are safeguarding concerns.

- The pastoral team will inform other staff members, and parents/ carers, where appropriate.
- Sanctions (process for sanctions can be seen in flowchart in appendix A) and support for individuals 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 social care (if a child is felt to be at risk of significant harm).
- A clear and precise account of the incident will be recorded by the school in accordance with existing procedures. This will include recording appropriate details regarding decisions and action taken.

Responding to Bullying which Occurs Outside the School Premises

- School staff members have the power to discipline students for misbehaving outside the school premises.
- Sections 90 and 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 say that a school's disciplinary powers can be used to address students' conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff, but only if it would be reasonable for the school to regulate students' behaviour in those circumstances. School might refer matters to safeguarding agencies, such as the police or Children's Services, as an alternative.
- This may include bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in the neighbourhood.
- Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and a decision taken about action. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police will be informed.
- The school may sanction bullying that occurs outside school with school based sanctions (as identified within the school behaviour policy).

Online bullying

When responding to online bullying concerns, the school will:

- Act as soon as an incident has been reported or identified.
- Provide appropriate support for the person who has been bullied online 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.
- Take all available steps where possible to identify the person responsible. This may include:
    - looking at use of the school 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:
    - Support 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

- The Headteacher and members of the Senior Leadership Team can seize any electronic device, examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so (The Education Act 2011).
- There is no requirement to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone.
- If an electronic device that is prohibited by the school rules has been seized and the member of staff has reasonable ground to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence, the school will give the device to the police as soon as it is reasonably practicable.
- The School will ensure that sanctions are applied to the person responsible for the online/cyberbullying; the school will take steps to change the attitude and behaviour of the perpetrator of the bullying, as well as ensuring access to any additional help that they may need.

Supporting students

Students who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Reassuring the student and providing ongoing support.
- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with their teacher, the Head of Year, DSL/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 counselling, 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 the School Counsellor, Early Help or Specialist Children's Services, or support through Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Students who have perpetrated the bullying will be helped, where appropriate, by:
- Discussing what happened, establishing the concern 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/discipline policy; this may include official warnings, detentions, removal of privileges (including online access when encountering online/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 School Counsellor, Police or referrals to Early Help, Specialist Children's Services, or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) as appropriate.

Supporting adults
- George Abbot School takes measures to prevent and tackle bullying among students; however, it is equally important to recognise that bullying of staff and parents/carers, whether by students, parents/carers or other staff members, is unacceptable.
- Adults (staff and parents/carers) who have been bullied or affected will be supported by*:*
    - Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the concern with the DSL/DDSL, a senior member of staff and/or the Headteacher.
    - Establishing whether a legitimate grievance or concern has been raised and signposting to the school's official complaints procedures.
    - 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 school's 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 (staff and parents/carers) 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.
- Actions following investigation:
    - Instigating disciplinary, civil or legal action as appropriate or required.

Preventing bullying
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.

- Encourage all students to report incidents of bullying
- Encourage all students to speak to their tutors or Head of Year regarding incidents of bullying.
- Recognise that bullying can be perpetrated or experienced by any member of the community, including adults and children (child on child abuse).
- Actively promote a culture that is open and acceptance of difference.
- Openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as: religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related difference. Also children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities.
- Challenge practice and language which does not uphold the 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.
- Engage in active debate with partner organisations to review and develop anti-bullying practices.

Useful links and supporting organisations

- Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- Childline: www.childline.org.uk
- Family Lives: www.familylives.org.uk
- Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.ukMindEd: www.minded.org.uk
- NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk
- The BIG Award: www.bullyinginterventiongroup.co.uk/index.phpPSHE
- 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
- The Restorative Justice Council: www.restorativejustice.org.uk/restorative-practice-schools

Appendix A – School flowchart to support decision-making

