



## Coleridge Anti-Bullying Policy

Date: **April 2026**

Review date: **April 2028**

### Context

At Coleridge, we work hard to create a safe, happy, and inclusive school environment where every child can thrive. We believe that children learn best when they feel secure, respected, and valued as individuals.

We know, however, that despite our best efforts, bullying can still happen. When it does, it can be deeply upsetting and even traumatising for children and for their families. We want parents and carers to know that we take bullying very seriously and will always respond quickly and effectively to any allegations.

Our approach is based on education, support, and prevention. We teach children what bullying is, how to call it out for themselves or for others, and how to seek help from trusted adults. We encourage a culture of kindness, empathy, and speaking up — because standing up for others is caring and inclusive.

When bullying is reported, we act promptly to investigate, address, and stop it immediately, ensuring children feel supported and safe. We also work closely with families to provide guidance, reassurance, and ongoing support where it is needed.

This policy explains how we define bullying, the steps we take to prevent it, and how we respond when incidents occur, so that children, parents, and staff are clear about our commitment and procedures.

### 1. Aims of the Policy

We aim to:

- Provide a **clear and shared definition** of bullying
- **Prevent bullying** by developing pupils' social skills, emotional intelligence, and positive relationships through the curriculum and daily school life
- **Identify and respond early** to bullying incidents and deal with them effectively and responsibly
- **Communicate clearly** how bullying concerns are reported, investigated, and resolved
- **Support pupils and parents/carers** when bullying occurs

- Ensure a **consistent approach** to bullying, both in and out of school

## 2. School Ethos

Coleridge is an outstanding school where children's happiness and emotional wellbeing are central to everything we do. We believe that children learn best when they feel safe, secure, and understood as individuals.

At Coleridge, our approach to behaviour and relationships is rooted in our five core values:

- Caring
- Resilient
- Creative
- Aspirational
- Inclusive

These values guide every aspect of school life. By actively nurturing them, we help children develop empathy and respect for others, creating a culture where kindness is the norm and bullying is far less likely to occur. Our values also empower pupils to speak up confidently—whether in support of themselves or others—and to recognise and challenge unkind behaviour when it arises.

Moreover, by encouraging resilience and inclusivity, we equip children with the emotional tools to manage difficulties, recover from setbacks, and maintain positive relationships even when challenges occur. Together, these principles form the foundation of a safe, supportive, school community.

## 4. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to bullying that takes place:

- On school premises
- During school-related activities
- Online, including outside school hours
- Off-site, where behaviour affects the wellbeing or safety of other pupil in our school

Where bullying outside school is reported to staff, it will be investigated and acted upon where it is reasonable to do so. Sanctions may be applied when pupils are under the lawful control of school staff.

## 5. Definition of Bullying

Bullying is 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*, 2017)

Bullying is characterised by **repetition, intent to cause harm**, and often an **imbalance of power**, where it may be difficult for the child experiencing the behaviour to defend themselves. Bullying can take many forms, including physical, verbal, emotional, or online behaviour.

The school recognises the importance of distinguishing between bullying and other forms of behaviour such as occasional disagreements, friendship difficulties, or one-off incidents of unkindness or aggression. Individual incidents of unkind or aggressive behaviour can be upsetting and distressing and should always be taken seriously and addressed appropriately. However, isolated incidents, or incidents that are extremely infrequent, even when involving the same child, do not in themselves constitute bullying.

All reported concerns will be listened to carefully and responded to sensitively. The school is committed to promoting positive relationships and will take appropriate action to support children involved, whether or not an incident meets the formal definition of bullying.

### **Children with Additional or High Needs**

The school also recognises that some children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or additional needs, may display behaviour that is challenging and, at times, may result in other children being hurt or upset. In such circumstances, the behaviour may be impulsive, reactive, or related to a child’s individual needs, rather than being intentional, targeted, or premeditated.

While any behaviour that causes harm will always be taken seriously and addressed, incidents arising from a child’s additional needs do not automatically constitute bullying. The school will carefully consider the **context, intent, frequency, and individual circumstances** of all children involved. Supportive and proportionate measures will be put in place to safeguard those affected, while also ensuring that children with additional needs are understood, supported, and helped to develop positive strategies for managing their behaviour.

### **Bullying may include:**

- Name calling, taunting, mocking, or offensive comments
- Physical aggression
- Taking or damaging belongings
- Gossiping, spreading rumours, or deliberate exclusion
- Offensive graffiti

### **Online (cyber) bullying may include:**

- Sending offensive or upsetting messages

- Sharing or posting hurtful images or videos
- Bullying through games, websites, apps, or social media

Bullying is recognised as a form of **peer-on-peer abuse** and can cause significant emotional and physical harm.

## 6. Reporting Bullying Concerns

- All reports of bullying should be made to the class teacher in the first instance.
- Reports may be made in person, by email, or in a telephone conversation with the teacher.
- The class teacher may seek support from the Year Team Leader or Senior Leadership Team (SLT) in investigating or resolving the allegation.
- Pupils are encouraged to report bullying that they experience **or witness**. All reports will be taken seriously.

## 7. Response and Investigation Procedures

When a bullying concern is reported, the school will:

1. **Acknowledge the concern**
  - Initial concerns raised over email will be acknowledged within one school day, where possible.
2. **Investigate the incident**
  - Staff will take time to gather information from all parties involved.
  - This will normally take place within five school days, depending on the nature of the incident; however, it may take longer in more nuanced or covert cases where a period of monitoring may be necessary.
3. **Decide and take action**
  - Appropriate action will be taken in line with the Behaviour Policy.
  - Actions will be proportionate to the seriousness and persistence of the behaviour.
4. **Communicate outcomes**
  - Parents/carers of pupils involved will be informed of the outcome and next steps.
  - Care will be taken to respect confidentiality.
5. **Review and follow up**
  - The situation will be reviewed after an agreed period to ensure that the bullying has stopped and that support remains effective.
6. **Provide ongoing pastoral support and restorative work**
  - The child who has experienced bullying will be offered appropriate pastoral support, which may include support from the class teacher, access to the school's counselling service, or involvement in the school's Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) programme.
  - Where appropriate, pastoral support may also be provided to the child whose behaviour has caused harm, to help them understand the impact of their actions and to support positive behaviour moving forward.
  - In discussion with parents/carers, and where it is considered safe and appropriate

to do so, the school may facilitate restorative work between those involved, with the aim of repairing relationships, rebuilding trust, and promoting positive future interactions.

**For more information on the process the school will undertake, please see the flow chart Appendix 1**

## **7a. Evidence and Sanctioning**

When responding to bullying allegations, we always start from the principle that the child reporting the incident is being truthful. Every report is taken seriously, and children are provided with emotional support and reassurance regardless of the outcome of the investigation.

However, when it comes to sanctioning an alleged perpetrator, the school must act based on evidence gathered through investigation and observation. Children may sometimes:

- Misunderstand situations
- Present one-sided versions of events
- Exaggerate or, in rare cases, make untrue allegations

If, after a thorough investigation, there is no evidence that bullying has occurred, it is not reasonable to impose sanctions on the alleged perpetrator. In these situations:

- The child who reported the incident will still receive support and guidance
- Parents will be informed of the outcome and the steps taken to investigate
- The school will continue to monitor relationships and interactions to ensure that all pupils feel safe

We understand that it can be upsetting for parents to hear that their child may have been involved in bullying, whether as a victim or alleged perpetrator. Our approach aims to ensure fairness, protection, and emotional support for all children, while maintaining a safe and respectful school environment.

## **8. Recording, Monitoring and Review**

- All alleged and confirmed bullying incidents will be recorded by designated staff, using the school's behaviour and safeguarding record keeping system, My Concern.
- Records will include:
  - Dates and details of allegations and incidents
  - Actions taken
  - Support provided
  - Outcomes and follow-up reviews
- Records will be reviewed regularly by the **Senior Leadership Team** to:
  - Identify patterns or repeated behaviour

- Monitor the impact on vulnerable groups
- Inform preventative and support strategies

This information will also support reporting to governors as part of safeguarding and behaviour monitoring.

## 9. Pupil Voice

The views of pupils are central to how bullying incidents are addressed.

- Pupils who have been bullied will be given the opportunity to:
  - Share their experience
  - Express how the incident has affected them
  - Contribute to decisions about support and next steps, where appropriate
- Pupils will be listened to respectfully, and their wishes will be taken seriously when planning responses and follow-up support.

## 10. Preventing Bullying

The school takes a proactive approach to preventing bullying.

Staff will:

- Promote an inclusive and respectful culture
- Challenge inappropriate language and behaviour
- Support vulnerable pupils through pastoral care and safe spaces
- Encourage responsible use of technology
- Work with parents, the community, and external agencies where appropriate
- Celebrate positive behaviour and achievements
- Pupils receive **regular age-appropriate messaging** about bullying through **PSHE lessons and assemblies**.
- Bullying is taught using the **STOP acronym: Several Times On Purpose**, helping children distinguish it from isolated incidents of unkindness or aggression.
- Children are taught strategies to respond to bullying:
  - **Infants:** Say *“Stop it, I don’t like it”*
  - **Juniors:** Say *“Please stop”* and describe the **effects of the behaviour on themselves**
- Children are encouraged to **seek help from a trusted adult** if the bullying continues.
- Pupils are taught to **call out bullying on behalf of others**, promoting a supportive and protective environment.
- Coleridge is a **telling school** — children are reminded that reporting bullying and **standing up for others is commendable**.

These measures are reinforced through lessons, assemblies, discussions, and pastoral support to build a culture of awareness, empathy, and courage across the school.

## 11. Through the Curriculum

Bullying prevention is embedded throughout the curriculum, particularly through:

- **PSHE and wellbeing education**, which incorporates STOP messaging, strategies to respond, and understanding differences between bullying and isolated incidents
- Lessons to encourage empathy, and understanding of diversity
- Assemblies that promote reflection, standing up for others, and positive behaviour
- Role-play, discussion, and social skills interventions
- Online safety education, including cyberbullying

Parents are supported through information on the school website and workshops.

## 12. Supporting Pupils

**Pupils who have been bullied will be supported through:**

- Reassurance and pastoral care
- Close partnership with parents/carers
- Opportunities to talk with a trusted adult
- Support to rebuild confidence and self-esteem
- Access to counselling, ELSAs or specialist services where appropriate

**Pupils who have bullied others will:**

- Receive appropriate sanctions in line with the Behaviour Policy
- Be supported to understand the impact of their behaviour
- Be involved in discussions to change behaviour
- Have parents/carers informed and involved
- Receive additional support or external intervention if required

## 13. Success Criteria

This policy will be effective when:

- Pupils, staff, governors, and parents understand how to report bullying
- Concerns are dealt with promptly and consistently
- Pupils feel listened to and supported
- The school community understands that bullying is not tolerated

## 14. Related Policies

- Behaviour Policy

- Complaints Procedure
- Safeguarding Policy
- Wellbeing Policy



## Is it bullying?

