St Annes College Grammar School

Anti Bullying Policy

Policy owner	St Annes College Ltd, registered proprietor
Responsible leads	Principal, Miss Abigail Welsby; DSL, Mrs Andrea Burrell
Operational leads	Pastoral Lead, Mrs Lucy Bridge; class or form tutors
Approval	Approved by Proprietor
Policy date	September 2026
Effective date	27th September 2026
Review	September 2027 or sooner if guidance or practice changes

Every pupil at SACGS should feel safe, respected and able to learn. We prevent bullying through relationships, supervision, teaching and prompt action. We listen to children, take every report seriously, protect those affected and address harmful behaviour without assuming that one response suits every child. This policy explains what pupils, families and staff can expect.

1 Scope and framework

This policy covers pupils in Nursery, Juniors, Seniors and Sixth Form, on site, on school activities and transport, and online or outside school where conduct affects pupil safety, relationships or school life. It applies to reports by pupils, parents, staff and others. Staff conduct towards pupils is handled under the safeguarding and staff conduct procedures, not as pupil bullying.

The proprietor ensures that an effective anti-bullying strategy is drawn up and implemented so far as reasonably practicable, in accordance with paragraph 10 of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. This policy works with the behaviour policy, safeguarding and child protection policy, child-on-child abuse procedures, online safety policy, equality and SEND policies, complaints procedure and KCSIE 2026. Safeguarding procedures take precedence where a child may be at risk.

2 What we mean by bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group that hurts, intimidates, humiliates or excludes another pupil, commonly repeated over time and involving a real or perceived imbalance of power. It can be physical, verbal, social or online. The imbalance may arise from age, size, peer status, group numbers, access to information, dependency or vulnerability. Deliberate repetition is a useful indicator, but staff must assess the impact and context rather than rely on a rigid checklist.

A single serious incident, threat, sexual incident, discriminatory act or online post may cause substantial harm and must be addressed even if it does not fit a repeated-pattern definition. Staff must not wait for repetition or proof of intent before protecting a child or referring a safeguarding concern. A disagreement between peers is not automatically bullying, but it still deserves a proportionate response.

Bullying may involve racist or faith-targeted language; disability or SEND; sex, sexual harassment, sexual orientation or gender reassignment; appearance or body image; family circumstances, care experience or poverty; or another actual or perceived difference. It includes exclusion, coercion, rumours, humiliation, impersonation, threats, circulation of images, group chats and harassment across platforms. We recognise that pupils with SEND may communicate distress differently or face barriers to reporting. We make reasonable adjustments and do not excuse harmful conduct as banter, a joke or a feature of a diagnosis.

3 Prevention and school culture

Staff model respectful language, intervene in unkindness early and teach relationships, consent, equality, online safety and how to report concerns at an age-appropriate level. Pupils are taught to seek help for themselves or others, and that witnesses have a useful role without being expected to investigate or confront anyone. Staff supervise and review places and times where concerns arise, including transitions, breaks,

transport, changing areas and online interactions connected to school. We listen to pupil views, identify patterns from records and adapt supervision and teaching.

The school is calm and phone-free during the school day, but online bullying may occur beyond school hours or through other devices. This remains a school concern when it affects a pupil's safety or participation. Preventive support may include a trusted adult, planned check-ins, peer group work or adjustments to the environment. Staff do not label a child as a permanent "victim" or "bully".

4 Reporting concerns

A pupil may tell any trusted adult in person or in writing, with help to communicate if needed. Parents can contact the class or form tutor, Pastoral Lead, DSL or school office. Staff who witness, receive or suspect bullying act promptly, take the account seriously and make a factual record in the school's approved system. They explain that information will be shared with people who need to help and do not promise secrecy.

If there is immediate danger, staff call 999 or obtain urgent medical help, then notify the DSL. Any indication of child-on-child abuse, sexual violence or harassment, exploitation, threats of significant harm, serious discriminatory harm, self-harm, repeated absence linked to fear, or other safeguarding risk is reported immediately to the DSL or a deputy. Staff do not conduct their own detailed interviews, ask leading questions, mediate a sexual or abusive incident, or delay a referral while establishing whether conduct is "bullying". If the DSL is unavailable, staff follow the safeguarding policy and make a direct referral where necessary.

Other reports are passed promptly to the Pastoral Lead or class or form tutor, with the DSL informed when the nature or pattern warrants safeguarding oversight. A child or parent who remains concerned may contact the Principal; safeguarding concerns can always be raised with the DSL directly. The school responds to a concern even when the person reporting asks to remain anonymous, although this may limit investigation.

5 Initial response and assessment

The first member of staff checks immediate safety, listens without blaming, records the child's own words where possible and explains the next step. A named lead decides whether the case follows safeguarding procedures or a proportionate pastoral and behaviour response. They consider the child's wishes and safety, SEND and communication needs, any power imbalance, previous incidents, discriminatory elements, online evidence and risk of retaliation. The DSL advises on referral to children's social care or police and on information sharing. Staff must never ask a pupil to forward, download or delete a suspected indecent image of a child; the DSL follows current specialist guidance.

Where an ordinary bullying investigation is appropriate, the lead speaks separately to those involved and relevant witnesses, preserves available evidence and keeps an open mind. Children are not required to confront one another. An incident is recorded even if the allegation is unsubstantiated; the conclusion, reasons and ongoing support are recorded separately. We tell parents or carers when appropriate, while taking account of safeguarding risks, confidentiality and the rights of other children. We cannot promise to disclose another pupil's personal details or sanction.

6 Protection support and consequences

The lead makes a practical safety plan where needed: a trusted adult, check-ins, supervision, seating or timetable adjustments, safe movement between spaces, online blocking and reporting, and steps to prevent retaliation. The pupil harmed should not bear the burden of avoiding places or people. Their views and choices matter, subject to safety. The DSL considers early help or external support where necessary, particularly if attendance, mental health or wellbeing are affected.

We also assess the needs of the pupil whose behaviour caused harm. Staff teach and reinforce expected conduct, consider underlying needs without minimising the effect on others, and use proportionate consequences under the behaviour policy. Serious or repeated behaviour may require a safeguarding response, risk management and consideration of suspension or exclusion under the applicable policy. Police

or children's social care may be contacted where appropriate. A restorative conversation or apology may be offered only after safety is established and the affected child freely agrees; neither is required as a condition of support or resolution.

7 Online and out of school incidents

Staff consider the school's safeguarding and behaviour responsibilities when an incident occurs outside school, including on transport or online, and affects pupils in school. The response may include safety planning, contacting parents, use of platform reporting tools, liaison with another setting or referral to agencies. Staff preserve relevant evidence without circulating harmful content. Searching or handling a pupil's device follows a separately approved school procedure and applicable law; staff must not assume an unrestricted power to inspect or delete personal files.

8 Recording follow up and oversight

The lead records the report, date, people involved, children's own accounts, protected or prejudice-based element where relevant, risk assessment, action, parent contact, referrals, outcomes and planned review. Safeguarding records are handled under the child protection policy and restricted appropriately. Incidents are reviewed with the affected child within an agreed period and again as needed to establish whether behaviour has stopped and the child feels safe. Renewed harm triggers reassessment and escalation, not simply another informal warning.

The Pastoral Lead and DSL review patterns at least termly, including locations, repeated names, discriminatory incidents, online trends and the effectiveness of action. The Principal reports material themes and improvement actions to the proprietor, preserving pupils' confidentiality. The proprietor checks that the strategy is implemented effectively, supported by records, pupil voice and staff training.

9 Roles and communication

The Proprietor/Principal owns the strategy and its effectiveness, ensures resources, staff training, consistent behaviour decisions and oversight. The DSL leads safeguarding decisions and referrals. The Pastoral Lead coordinates non-safeguarding responses and follow-up. Class and form tutors notice changes, support pupils and pass on concerns. Every adult acts on what they see or hear. Pupils are encouraged to report harm and to seek help for others. Parents work with the school and may use the complaints procedure if dissatisfied with the response.

10 Review and linked procedures

The Proprietor approves and reviews this policy annually, and sooner after a significant incident or change in law or guidance. Staff receive the policy and relevant updates. It is made available to parents and pupils in accessible forms. The Behaviour Policy must also contain or clearly incorporate measures to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying and prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying, as required by KCSIE 2026.

Appendix 1 Staff response guide

1. Listen, reassure and check immediate safety. Call 999 for immediate danger.

2. Record the pupil's words and facts promptly. Do not promise secrecy or conduct a detailed safeguarding investigation.

3. Tell the DSL immediately if abuse, sexual behaviour, serious harm, discrimination with safeguarding impact or another risk is suspected. Otherwise alert the Pastoral Lead or tutor promptly.

4. Agree who leads, assess risk and needs, and put protective steps in place.

5. Speak to pupils separately where a pastoral investigation is appropriate; record findings and reasons.

6. Tell families as appropriate, implement support and proportionate consequences, and set a review date.

7. Check with the affected child that the behaviour has stopped; escalate if it continues.

References

The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Schedule, paragraph 10; Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, particularly Parts one, two and five; Equality Act 2010; Department for Education advice on preventing and tackling bullying and online safety.