

Ambleford School Anti-Bullying Policy

Reviewed: September 2025

Next Review: August 2026 (or earlier if required by regulatory updates)

1. Introduction

Ambleford School is committed to fostering a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment where every pupil feels valued and protected. Bullying in any form is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. This policy sets out the proactive strategies used to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying, ensuring compliance with statutory guidance including *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025)*, the *Education and Inspections Act 2006*, the *Equality Act 2010*, *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)*, and the DfE guidance *Preventing and Tackling Bullying (2017)*. The policy applies to the entire school community, including pupils, staff, volunteers, parents, carers, and visitors.

2. Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined as behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another person physically, emotionally, or socially. Bullying can take many forms. Physical bullying may include hitting, pushing, tripping, spitting, or damaging property. Verbal bullying includes name-calling, threats, insults, or mocking. Social bullying involves deliberate exclusion, spreading rumours, or humiliation. Cyberbullying occurs through digital means such as social media, text messages, emails, or online gaming platforms, and may include impersonation, spreading false information, or harassment. Ambleford School recognises that bullying can happen in person or online and is clear that both are equally unacceptable.

3. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy reflects the school's duty under the *Education and Inspections Act 2006* to promote good behaviour and prevent bullying. It complies with the *Equality Act 2010*, which requires schools to prevent discrimination, harassment, and victimisation, ensuring protection for pupils with protected characteristics. It supports the safeguarding duties set out in the *Children Acts 1989 and 2004*, and recognises that bullying can be a safeguarding matter, particularly where it results in significant harm, persistent harassment, or mental health difficulties. The policy follows expectations set by *KCSIE 2025* and *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023*.

4. Prevention Strategies

Ambleford School adopts a proactive and whole-school approach to preventing bullying, combining education, supervision, and the development of a positive culture.

Through education and awareness, pupils take part in workshops, and PSHE lessons that address empathy, respect, discrimination, diversity, and the impact of bullying. Digital citizenship and online safety are embedded into the curriculum to help pupils navigate risks in the digital world responsibly.

Effective supervision and monitoring are in place across all activities. Pupils are provided with clear reporting channels, including confidential options, and every pupil is supported by a “safe adult” whom they can approach if they feel unable to share concerns more widely.

The school actively promotes a positive culture where kindness, teamwork, and inclusion are rewarded. Peer mentoring is encouraged, and school-wide campaigns celebrate diversity and respect.

Staff are trained annually in recognising and addressing bullying, including the subtler forms of peer-on-peer abuse and online harassment. DSLs and pastoral staff receive additional training in managing the safeguarding and mental health aspects of bullying. All staff follow a clear intervention protocol when bullying is suspected or reported.

Ambleford School also works in partnership with external organisations and safeguarding partners to access resources, training, and best practice, and to ensure effective support for pupils experiencing bullying.

5. Reporting and Response Procedures

All reports of bullying are taken seriously, treated sensitively, and logged systematically. Pupils can report bullying to any member of staff, and they are encouraged to approach the DSL if they feel unsafe or worried. Parents and guardians may raise concerns with the class teaching assistant, or Headteacher, and anonymous reporting routes are also available to pupils.

Once a report is received, the DSL and team investigate by collecting statements from those involved and assessing the situation for safeguarding risks. Where necessary, a risk assessment is conducted, especially in cases involving cyberbullying, repeated incidents, or sexual harassment. Parents of all pupils involved are kept informed throughout the process.

Victims of bullying are supported with access to counselling, mentoring, and pastoral care. Where appropriate, restorative conversations are facilitated to repair harm, but

only when this is safe and agreed by all parties. Staff continue to monitor the situation closely to ensure that the pupil feels safe and protected.

Interventions for those found to have bullied others are proportionate and designed to support behaviour change as well as provide accountability. These may include restorative justice sessions, behaviour contracts, mentoring, and parental involvement. In serious cases, formal disciplinary measures are applied. These range from the loss of privileges or temporary internal exclusions to fixed-term external exclusions. Permanent exclusion is considered only as a last resort, in line with the school's Behaviour Policy.

6. Cyberbullying and Online Safety

Ambleford School recognises that cyberbullying can be particularly harmful, as it often occurs outside of school hours, spreads rapidly, and may reach a wide audience. The school treats online bullying as seriously as face-to-face bullying. Pupils are taught digital safety and responsible online behaviour, and school devices are monitored with appropriate filtering systems in place. Pupils are supported in reporting abusive content online, and staff work with parents and external agencies to respond effectively. Consequences for perpetrators of cyberbullying mirror those for in-person bullying and may also involve law enforcement or safeguarding services.

7. Parental and Community Involvement

Parents play an essential role in supporting a culture of respect and in modelling positive behaviour at home and in the community. Ambleford School engages parents through regular communication, workshops on online safety and bullying prevention, and encouragement to reinforce school values at home. The school maintains open dialogue with families and ensures that parents are involved in resolving serious incidents.

8. Monitoring and Review

The school leadership team and Directors oversee the implementation of this policy and monitor its effectiveness. Records of bullying incidents are reviewed termly to identify patterns and inform prevention strategies. Data is used to assess the impact of interventions and to shape school-wide initiatives. The policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if statutory guidance changes, to ensure that it remains compliant with DfE, ISI, and KCSIE requirements.

9. Conclusion

Ambleford School is dedicated to ensuring that all pupils feel safe, respected, and valued. By embedding a whole-school approach to prevention, providing clear procedures for reporting and intervention, and working in partnership with parents and external agencies, we aim to eliminate bullying in all its forms. This policy is made available to staff, pupils, and parents via the school website, and it is available in hard copy on request. It may also be shared with regulatory bodies as required.