Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy applies to:

Senior School pupils

Person responsible for the policy:

Senior Deputy Head

Policy reviewed by Board of Governors – July 2026

Review dates:

Last review July 2026

Next review July 2027

Aims:

The College takes any bullying extremely seriously. It aims to treat each case individually and take into account any special circumstances when making decisions. Ultimately the College knows that students will learn best in a safe and supportive environment that is free from disruption and in which education is the primary focus.

Terms:

In this document the terms "bully" or "perpetrator" and "victim" are used. "Bully" is used of someone who has manifested bullying behaviour; "victim" is used of someone who has received bullying behaviour. The terms are used for ease of reference. There is no suggestion that these are discrete categories of people, or that their involvement in bullying behaviour is necessarily either pervasive or persistent.

College Code on Bullying:

All reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that, so far as it is possible, every student feels safe and happy at the College and feels supported and protected at all times.

This **Anti-Bullying Policy**, aims to outline measures to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying.
The College expects all members of the community to uphold the College Code on Bullying which should be read alongside the **Behaviour and Conduct Policy**, where matters are reiterated here:

- Every student at Ardingly has the right to enjoy their learning and leisure time free from intimidation;
- Our College community will not tolerate unkind actions or remarks, even when these were not intended to hurt;
- To stand by, when someone else is being bullied, is to support bullying;
- If you are being bullied, or you know of someone who is being bullied, you should report this to a member of staff or a responsible senior student;
- Bullying will always be taken seriously.

Types of Bullying Behaviour:

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Repeated instances, or where there is a trend in a certain type of behaviour is often defined as bullying but the College may still take action in response to a single incident deemed to be bullying behaviour, to record and sanction as needs be.

As a College we will intervene if actions or remarks are intended or unintended to hurt a fellow student as only then can unacceptable behaviours be realised.

Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it

difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online. Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can in itself have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as banter or horseplay it can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviour. Early intervention can help to set clear expectations of the behaviour that is and isn't acceptable and help stop negative behaviours escalating.

Types of bullying, including protected characteristics, could be prejudice-based or discriminatory bullying and include:

Physical Bullying
Physical bullies tend to dominate through force. Examples of bullying behaviour include hitting, kicking, pushing people around, and spitting but might also include intimidating someone and isolating or excluding them from the group. Taking, damaging or hiding possessions and demanding money is also considered to be physical bullying.

Taunting and Teasing
This is a very common type of bullying but no less hurtful and unpleasant. Such behaviour includes: name calling, insulting, spreading rumours or writing unkind notes. Bullies often claim that they did not realise their actions and comments were causing offence but victims never find such assaults acceptable.

Sexual bullying/harassment
Sexual bullying involves unwanted and unwelcome attention of a sexual nature. This may be physical or verbal or involve the denigration of an individual on sexual grounds or by sexual means. Any unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment for the recipient may be regarded as sexual bullying. It can affect all children.

When referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child-on-child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.
Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:
• sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names
• sexual "jokes" or taunting
• physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes. Schools and colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence.
• displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature
• upskirting (this is a criminal offence136), and
• online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include:
    o consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos. Taking and sharing nude photographs of U18s is a criminal offence. UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people provides detailed advice for schools and colleges. o sharing of unwanted explicit content
    o sexualised online bullying

o unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media
o sexual exploitation; coercion and threats, and
o coercing others into sharing images of themselves or performing acts they're not comfortable with online.

Racial bullying
Racial bullying is offensive action and behaviour, deliberate or otherwise, relating to race, colour, ethnic or national origin and directed at an individual or group. It is objectionable to the recipient and creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

Religious or Cultural Bullying
Religious or Cultural Bullying is bullying because of a person's religion, belief or culture. This includes a broad definition of belief and cultures and includes minority religions, humanists, atheists and people of different nationalities.

Homophobic or sexual orientation bullying
This is bullying directed at persons or groups on the grounds of a perceived or actual sexual orientation (applying equally to homosexual, heterosexual or bisexual boys or girls). In terms of sexual orientation, discrimination can occur because of an association with a gay or bisexual person (friend or relative etc.). General use of homophobic language is not acceptable and will not go unpunished.

Disability Bullying
Bullying in respect of a person's disability or impairment. This extends to and includes children with special educational needs.

Allergy-related Bullying
Bullying in respect of a person's allergies is the intentional exposure, teasing, or exclusion of someone based on their medical condition.

Staff should also be constantly aware of the possibility that a pupil may be bullied on account of their because they are **adopted** or fulfil a role as a **carer**.

What is cyberbullying?

- Cyberbullying is the use of ICT deliberately to upset someone else;
- It includes: threats and intimidation; harassment or 'cyber-stalking'; vilification/defamation; humiliation; manipulation, whether open or anonymous; exclusion or peer rejection; impersonation; unauthorised use of private information or images; posting without consent.

Please refer to the College's **Cyberbullying Policy** for further information.

Why Bullying is Serious:

All aspects of bullying behaviour affect the victim. Bullying on the basis of protected characteristics or discriminatory bullying (as stated above) is taken particularly seriously.

Bullying can seriously damage a young person's confidence and sense of self-worth, and they will often feel that they are at fault in some way. It can lead to serious and prolonged emotional damage for an individual and even suicide. Those who conduct the bullying or witness the bullying can also

experience emotional harm, and the impact on parents and College staff can be significant. Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.

The College recognises that bullying can occur: from staff to staff, from staff to student, from student to staff, and from student to student (child on child). While the College considers all forms of bullying unacceptable, this document focuses only on the last category. For the previous categories, other policies can assist such as the **Low Level Concerns policy, Professional Code of Conduct** and **Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Staff.**

What is done to Prevent or Reduce Incidents of Bullying?

The Ethos of the College:

An open, positive, caring and trusting atmosphere is promoted in the College. Staff are expected to educate without prejudice or discrimination. They understand the College's principles, policies and responsibilities. They are urged, as far as possible, to anticipate problems before they escalate. Staff discipline sensibly and fairly. The College provides many opportunities to listen to students, informally in Houses and in more formal contexts such as the Student Council. The College's rewards and sanctions system promotes and encourages good behaviour. Equal opportunities practices are observed in College and Houses: discriminatory words and behaviour are treated as unacceptable; positive attitudes are fostered towards people who are disabled and towards ethnic, cultural and linguistic groups within and outside the College (our diverse community, in which many nationalities are represented and celebrated, helps to increase acceptance of different cultures); positive attitudes are fostered towards all students through the curriculum and tutorials.

The College encourages students to be completely open regarding bullying. Students are not made to feel guilty about or intimidated by airing complaints. Moreover, students are encouraged to realise that it is always better to share their concerns. Sharing what is happening will help the victim to deal with their feelings. Bullying thrives on secrecy, so it is best dealt with by being brought into the open. An ethos of open discussion may save other people from becoming victims of the same bully. Finally, the College reminds students that bullying can never be passed off as "just banter".

Education of our Staff:

Appropriate training in all aspects of care is arranged, to ensure that all staff have the necessary professional skills, especially pertaining to the risk and indications of child abuse and bullying and who to deal with such instances. Staff training takes place in various forms – from the earliest stages of staff induction (where school policies are shared, read and understood), staff INSET sessions (including specialist speakers on LGBTQIA+ matters, and ED&I College leads taking INSET) as well as working and training within pastoral teams as they engage with the Day/Boarding Houses. E.g. Humiliating students is an example of a reportable Low-Level Concern (see relevant LLC policy) that must be reported to the most relevant member of leadership. Staff need to know how to identify bullying (including cyberbullying), challenge it and know how to report this in order to hold bullies accountable and to support the victim(s).

Education of our Pupils:

The tutorial, house and school assemblies and PSHE programmes effectively educate students about the dangers of bullying and that it will not be accepted. Throughout the PSHE programme and in other workshops, projects, use of literature, visiting speakers are also invited to educate pupils about bullying. A course on bullying forms part of the Lower School and Middle School PSHE curriculum. This includes debate on:

- Healthy relationships.
- Who is the "bully"? Who is the "victim"?
- Why are some "bullies" and others "victims"?
- What should a student do if they are being bullied?
- What constitutes bullying? Where are the boundaries?
- By-Stander training in the Enrichment Programme.
- World Ready talks and Social Education programme

House and College Prefects are trained at the beginning of the academic year so that they interact with younger students sensitively. Older students are encouraged to keep an eye on younger students, offering support where needed. This is further built on via the Enrichment Programme e.g. 'bystander training and various (often student-lead) societies e.g. New Era, LGTQIA+

Monitoring of Our Pupils:

Members of staff are vigilant at all times, but particularly outside rooms before and between lessons, and in the Dining Hall. Situations where bullying is likely to occur are monitored closely. In particular, the member of staff on day duty patrols the Café plaza area at break and close supervision of the lunch queue will be maintained by staff. A member of the College's Senior Management Team is also on duty each lunch time to help monitor the queue and dining hall.

Housemasters and Housemistresses, Tutors, House staff and senior students are alert to the possibility of bullying in Houses, particularly in study bedrooms and common areas.

Meetings of Housemasters/Housemistresses and House Prefects regularly discuss bullying within the House. Pastoral leads regularly communicate with the Tutors of students in their House and monitor their Tutor records. Tutors regularly discuss relationships, including bullying, with their tutees. Housemasters and Housemistresses are informed of relevant bullying incidents as soon as possible. Where necessary, Housemasters and Housemistresses report to other staff in the College issues and incidents involving individual students. There is effective and close liaison between Health & Wellbeing staff and House staff. House and College Prefects are monitored to ensure that their responsibility is properly exercised. A Student Welfare Questionnaire is used each year in Houses to gauge student feeling. The school uses CPOMS to record behavioural concerns or other events so that trends or single incidents of problems with well-being can be effectively noted and managed.

Involving our Parents:

The College will make every effort to engage with parents and involve them to ensure that pupils know how to deal with bullying if it occurs and are clear about the part that they can play to prevent bullying. This includes when they find themselves as bystanders or in sharing of information which may help the College to address any forms of bullying.

The **Anti-Bullying Policy** is available for all parents on the College's website. The Parents' Handbook makes it very clear that the College's ethos is based on tolerance, respect and care. Whenever a bullying incident occurs, the parents of both parties will be contacted at the appropriate time within the process and once the College has had sufficient time to understand the involvement of respective parties. Often parents will be invited for a face-to-face meeting with either the relevant HoMM, Head of Section or Deputy Head to discuss the incident, next steps and any required follow up. The school endeavours to update parents about the various social media developments that might facilitate bullying online. Parent forums can be used for this purpose and relevant workshops for parents are made available.

Procedures to deal with alleged incidents of Bullying:

Any student being bullied or knowing that someone is being bullied should report what is happening to their parents or guardians or to someone in authority within the College, in accordance with the College Code on Bullying. The following people are available:

- Form Tutor/Tutor or any other teacher,
- Housemaster or Housemistress,
- House Matron /House supervisor
- A College prefect, House prefect or a senior student
- The Chaplain
- Peer Listener
- A Counsellor (contactable through the Health & Wellbeing Centre) or the Independent Listener (Jim Sloane 01444 892681)
- A School Doctor or a Nurse in the Health Centre
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Any of the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads
- Any member of the Senior Management Team.

While a member of College staff may be better placed to support, they may also wish to contact:

- Social Services Childcare Helpdesk: 01293 572444
- Office of the Children's Commissioner: 02077838330
- ChildLine: 0800 1111.

The welfare of the victim should be considered of paramount importance. The student should be informed of any actions taken. They might need help to deal with their feelings and to understand and overcome their vulnerability.

Any person in authority who learns of alleged bullying behaviour should offer support to the alleged victim and then report the allegation to the **Pastoral leads** – either Head of Lower School, Pastoral (for Years 7 & 8) or Housemasters/Housemistresses (for Years 9 to 13) of the students involved (i.e. both victim and bully) as soon as possible. If it is not deemed appropriate for a Pastoral lead to be the first contact point, concerns can be taken directly to any member of the Senior Management team.

Pastoral leads will record this and, if they consider it appropriate, interview both the alleged victim and bully and any possible witnesses from their House. These interviews will be recorded, together with action taken in the case as a whole. Records will be kept by Pastoral leads, entered to CPOMS along with other actions taken. Pastoral leads must notify the Senior Deputy Head of all alleged

bullying incidents and provide records of how the incident has been dealt with. The Senior Deputy Head becomes involved in the more serious of these incidents and keeps a record of the event and the resulting sanctions. This record is used to evaluate the effectiveness of the College's policy and to identify any patterns or trends. Records will distinguish if any of the incidents of bullying are based on protected characteristics. This will also enable the College to monitor the success in meeting other standards such as instilling values of tolerance and respect and actively promoting the well-being of pupils.

Where a bullying incident is deemed sufficiently serious, a senior member of the College (most likely but not limited to the Head, a Deputy Head or the DSL) will report it to appropriate external agencies such as the police or children's social services.

Pastoral leads will be in contact with parents of both the victim and the bully about the case and any action taken.

Pastoral leads should consider sharing information with some or all colleagues, especially the Tutors of the students concerned, and with students in the House, in order that they may be alert to the need to monitor certain students closely.

The bully should be given help and support in trying to change their behaviour as well as in understanding their own feelings and motivations.

It is essential that Pastoral leads of both the victim and the bully continue to monitor the situation regularly. If the victim and the bully are from different Houses, the relevant Pastoral leads should discuss their findings regularly during the first few weeks after an alleged incident, until they are satisfied that further incidents are unlikely.

Sanctions:

Any sanction should be effective in stopping the bullying behaviour.

Students are informed that bullying will not be tolerated in the College and that it is a disciplinary offence. Any of the appropriate College sanctions may apply – also see Behaviour and Conduct policy. It is likely that a serious bullying incident or an incident which is itself minor but forms part of a cycle of such incidents will, as a first step, result in external suspension.

Ultimately, a bully who does not change his or her behaviour may have to leave the College.

A bullying incident might be treated as a Child Protection concern when there is evidence to suggest that a child is suffering significant harm.
This policy should be read in conjunction with the following additional College policies, Government guidance and further information:

- **Behaviour and Conduct Policy**
- **Safeguarding Policy – joint safeguarding and child protection policy**
- **Cyberbullying Policy**
- **DfE guidance on Bullying**: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying

- **Childnet guidance on Cyberbullying**: https://www.childnet.com/resources/cyberbullying-guidance-for-schools
- www.bullying.co.uk (available 24/7) throws a lifeline to despairing parents whose children are being bullied and who don't know what to do. Contains advice for both children being bullied and their parents.
- www.kidscape.org.uk has lots of leaflets, booklets and help for parents of children suffering bullying. They can also train teachers, children and parents' groups in dealing with or preventing bullying.
- www.childline.org.uk is the UK's free national helpline for children and young people in trouble or danger who can call free 24 hours a day on 0800 1111.
- http://www.ceop.police.uk/ - Child Exploitation and Online Protection advice regarding sex and relationships with particular attention to social media and on-line issues.