Stone Lodge School

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

1. Policy Framework and References

This policy has been drafted with reference to:

• Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026

• Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026

• DfE Behaviour in Schools (current version)

• DfE Preventing and Tackling Bullying (current guidance)

• DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation (current version)

• The Equality Act 2010

• The Independent School Standards

Stone Lodge School recognises that bullying behaviour may constitute a safeguarding concern and, in some circumstances, may be linked to child-on-child abuse, discriminatory behaviour, sexual harassment, online abuse, exploitation or other forms of harm. All incidents will be managed in accordance with this policy and the school's safeguarding procedures.

2. Statement of general principals

- Everyone has the right to feel safe in school.
- We should always be polite to each other.
- Everyone must take responsibility for their own actions.
- Everyone should be given respect.
- Stone Lodge School is committed to the principle that bullying constitutes unacceptable behaviour and that reports of bullying will be taken seriously.
- We recognise that some bullying behaviours maybe linked to the life experiences and special educational needs of our pupils
- We must support the victim
- We must work with the perpetrator to prevent future instances of bullying behaviours

Our aims are:

- To provide a secure environment in which pupils can report incidents confidently
- To show all pupils that bullying is taken seriously

- To enable staff to respond calmly and confidently to bullying incidents
- To reassure pupils that Stone Lodge School will protect and support all parties whilst the issues are resolved
- To provide long term and positive programmes of personal development

3. Introduction

These guidelines are intended to help staff to develop a shared understanding of the problems involved in identifying, containing, reporting and intervening when we face children's bullying behaviour. It is very important that we recognise the extremely negative effect that bullying has on an already vulnerable population and the impact it can have on the victim's mental health. We should also seek to understand the factors and feelings beneath the behaviours and subsequently address them if we are to eradicate them in the longer term and prevent them becoming a feature of adult life for the perpetrator. We recognise that such behaviours in later life may develop into criminal actions such as domestic violence as well as leading to higher likelihood of unemployment and further perpetuate Adverse Childhood Events for following generations.

We need a team approach and a common sense of purpose. We must have a generally understood framework for action and procedures that are clear and workable. Our hope is that the following policy will provide structures appropriate to these tasks.

This is an extremely important area. We work with children who exhibit social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. They have often been hurt themselves, have limited coping skills, poor social models or perceive threat and challenge where there is none (for example hypervigilance) leading them to target others. Understanding and preventing these complex and persistent aggressions within the peer group is one of our primary professional tasks – but explanation is not exoneration. Any failure to act appropriately will release sub-cultural peer group reactions, which may have serious consequences for a number of our pupils. We have to monitor the peer group very carefully for signs of intimidation and bullying. We must then take considered and decisive action – taking into account the not only the presenting behaviour but also the underlying reasons. We should always remember, that bullying research carried out in recent years has clearly demonstrated that the vast majority of pupils attending Stone Lodge School, come to us usually with a history of bullying as either victims or bullies and therefore it is incumbent on us to support the victim, challenge the behaviour and also help the perpetrator to understand the impact of their actions and prevent a re-occurrence.

4. What is Bullying?

Bullying may be motivated by prejudice, discrimination or a desire to exert power or control over another individual. It may be directed towards a pupil because of their actual or perceived:

- Race, ethnicity or nationality.
- Religion or belief.
- Disability or special educational needs.
- Sex.
- Sexual orientation.
- Gender reassignment.
- Pregnancy or maternity.
- Family circumstances or care status.
- Appearance, personal characteristics or individual differences.

The school recognises that prejudice-based bullying and discriminatory behaviour can have a particularly harmful impact on a child's safety, emotional wellbeing, confidence and sense of belonging. Such behaviour will always be challenged, investigated and recorded appropriately.

Definition of bullying

Bullying is defined by Stone Lodge School as deliberate and harmful behaviour by an individual or group towards another pupil, which is repeated over time or is likely to be repeated, and involves an imbalance of power that makes it difficult for the pupil experiencing it to defend themselves.

Bullying may be physical, verbal, emotional, psychological, social or online. The imbalance of power may be physical, social, emotional or psychological and may arise through differences in strength, popularity, confidence, communication, vulnerability or influence within a peer group.

Bullying can take place between individual pupils or involve groups of pupils targeting an individual. It may happen face-to-face, through digital technology or across both environments. It can occur within school, outside school or online, including outside school hours.

The school recognises that bullying can be particularly harmful to pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), communication difficulties, additional vulnerabilities or previous experiences of trauma.

Important safeguarding distinction

Although bullying is generally characterised by repeated behaviour, a single incident of harmful behaviour may still constitute child-on-child abuse or a safeguarding concern.

All reports of harmful behaviour will be taken seriously, whether or not they meet the school's definition of bullying. Staff must not dismiss an incident simply because it has happened once or because it is described as joking, banter or part of growing up.

Where behaviour may constitute child-on-child abuse, including physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, coercive or controlling behaviour, or other forms of harmful behaviour, staff must report the concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL without delay, in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Bullying and child-on-child abuse may overlap. Where appropriate, the school's anti-bullying and safeguarding procedures will operate together to ensure that all children are protected and supported.

Examples of bullying

Examples of bullying behaviour within our school context may include, but are not limited to:

Physical bullying

- Hitting, punching, kicking or pushing.
- Spitting or deliberately causing physical harm.
- Damaging, hiding or taking another pupil's belongings.
- Using physical intimidation or threats.
- Deliberately interfering with another pupil's personal space or possessions.

Verbal bullying

- Name-calling, insults or offensive language.
- Making racist, homophobic, sexist or discriminatory remarks.
- Making hurtful comments about another pupil's family, appearance, disability or personal circumstances.
- Threatening, intimidating or humiliating another pupil.
- Repeatedly targeting an individual's weaknesses or vulnerabilities.

Emotional and social bullying

- Deliberately excluding or isolating a pupil.
- Encouraging other pupils not to speak to or associate with someone.

- Spreading rumours or making malicious allegations.
- Giving threatening or intimidating looks or gestures.
- Preventing someone from joining games or group activities.
- Manipulating friendships or encouraging others to target an individual.
- Putting pressure on another pupil to complete tasks, hand over possessions, bring items from home or do things against their wishes.

Prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying

- Targeting pupils because of their race, ethnicity, religion, disability, SEND, sex, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics.
- Using discriminatory language, slurs or offensive gestures.
- Making derogatory comments about a pupil's identity, family circumstances or individual differences.
- Deliberately excluding or humiliating a pupil because of a protected characteristic.

Sexualised bullying and harmful behaviour

- Making unwanted sexualised comments, gestures or remarks.
- Making sexually degrading or humiliating comments about another pupil.
- Pressuring or coercing another pupil into sexualised behaviour.
- Unwanted touching or other sexually inappropriate behaviour.
- Sharing, threatening to share or creating sexualised images of another pupil without consent.

Sexual harassment, sexual violence and harmful sexual behaviour are safeguarding concerns and must be reported to the DSL or Deputy DSL immediately. They must never be dismissed as banter, joking or ordinary bullying.

Cyberbullying and online bullying

Cyberbullying is bullying or harmful behaviour carried out through electronic communication and digital technologies. It may take place through mobile phones, computers, social media, messaging applications, online gaming platforms or other digital services.

Online bullying can happen at any time, including outside school hours, and may have a significant impact on a pupil's safety, emotional wellbeing and education.

Examples include:

- Sending unkind, threatening, abusive or humiliating messages, images or videos, including AI generated images.
- Using social media, messaging applications or online gaming platforms to intimidate, harass or target another pupil.
- Deliberately excluding a pupil from online groups, conversations or activities.
- Sharing or threatening to share embarrassing, private or personal information.
- Creating or distributing harmful, manipulated or AI-generated images, videos or other content intended to intimidate, humiliate or distress another person.
- Creating fake profiles or accounts to impersonate, ridicule or target another pupil.
- Encouraging others to participate in online harassment or abuse.
- Sharing, requesting or threatening to distribute nude or semi-nude images of another pupil.
- Using digital platforms to threaten, control, blackmail or coerce another pupil.

The school recognises that online bullying and abuse may occur both within and outside school hours. Where online behaviour affects the safety, welfare, wellbeing or education of pupils, the school will take appropriate action in accordance with its safeguarding, behaviour and online safety procedures.

Staff must report safeguarding concerns arising from online behaviour to the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay. Any evidence must be handled in accordance with the school's safeguarding and online safety procedures. Staff must not download, copy, forward or share indecent images of children.

Our approach

Stone Lodge School takes a zero-tolerance approach to bullying, discriminatory behaviour and child-on-child abuse. All concerns will be taken seriously, appropriately investigated and recorded.

We recognise that children may display harmful behaviours for a range of reasons, including previous experiences of trauma, unmet needs, communication difficulties or difficulties with emotional regulation. Understanding the reasons behind behaviour is an important part of our therapeutic approach, but it does not excuse harmful behaviour or reduce our responsibility to protect the child who has been targeted.

The school will ensure that appropriate support, intervention and protective measures are put in place for all children involved, with the safety and welfare of pupils remaining the priority.

5. Emotional and Physical Symptoms Linked to Bullying

Stone Lodge School recognises that bullying may be an indicator that a child is at risk of harm. Certain behaviours may constitute child-on-child abuse and require safeguarding intervention.

Examples include:

• Sexual harassment

• Sexual violence

• Harmful sexual behaviour

• Prejudice-based incidents including racism

• Online abuse

• Coercive or controlling behaviour

• Behaviour linked to exploitation

Where concerns meet safeguarding thresholds, staff must follow the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) without delay.

It is often hard to spot children who are experiencing bullying. By its nature, it is an insidious activity that usually goes on out of sight of staff. The victim is often reluctant to come forward because they feel that 'telling' might only make matters worse for themselves and make the situation worse. The following symptoms might be an indication that a pupil is being bullied:

Emotional

- Lost confidence
- Loss of self-esteem
- Irritability
- Aggression
- Panic attacks
- Depression
- Suicidal thoughts

Physical

- Sleeplessness
- Nausea
- Shaking
- Heart racing
- Laziness
- Skin complaints
- Stomach aches
- Migraines and headaches

6. Who Bullies?

This policy has used the following books, publication and websites as key points of reference:

Elliot M (1991) Bullying: A Practical Guide to Coping for Schools, La Fontaine J (1991) Bullying: A Child's View, Pearce J (1989) Fighting, Teasing and Bullying, Smith P K and Thompson D (1991) Practical Approaches to Bullying, DfES Publications (2002) Bullying: don't suffer in silence, DCSF (2007) Safe to learn: embedding anti-bullying work in schools, Equality Act 2010, Current DfE guidance on Preventing and Tackling Bullying, Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), Working Together to Safeguard Children, and the Equality Act 2010., DfE Supporting Children and young people who are bullied: advice for schools 2014

It is clear from the literature that a significant number of our pupils experience home circumstances which foster the development of bullying attitudes – for example: -

- Poor parental role models
- Mental health issues
- Aggressive family figures
- Poor relationship with key adult
- Inconsistent punishment by parents
- Physically and verbally aggressive adults

"Bullies are associated with general anti-social rule breaking behaviour in school and in the community"
"They are often aggressive towards parents, teachers and siblings."

"Contrary to popular belief, bullying victims don't always differ much from other children"

(Quotes from Tattum and Herbert, 1990)

7. Who are the victims?

Any child can be bullied. There are, however, certain risk factors that will make the experience of bullying more likely. They include:

- Lacking close friends in school
- Being shy
- Coming from an over protective family environment
- Being from a different ethnic group to the majority
- Being different in some obvious respect from the majority
- Having particular educational, social or medical needs
- Being a Looked After Child
- Being a carer

None of these characteristics can excuse allowing a child to be bullied.

8. Our School Policy and Practice

The following guidelines provide a framework for containing and changing attitudes towards bullying. These have been compiled with reference to advice from the DfES anti-bullying guidance pack, Bullying: don't suffer in silence (2002) and DCSF Safe to Learn (2007), Equality Act 2010, Current DfE guidance on Preventing and Tackling Bullying, Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), Working Together to Safeguard Children, and the Equality Act 2010 and DfE Supporting Children and young people who are bullied: advice for schools March 2014 .

They are aimed at creating an ethos that will not tolerate the oppression of one person by another. These guidelines aim to establish a whole-school policy and contain both long and short-term strategies that involve the school organisation and curriculum.

- All pupils, parents and staff must recognise that any form of bullying is completely unacceptable in our school. This message will be made explicit when a child and his family/carers first come for interview; it will be stated very clearly in the pupil's handbook and will be reiterated regularly in school assemblies and tutor meetings.
- No member of staff or pupil must ever ignore a pupil being bullied or in distress as a result of being bullied. No tales of bullying must ever be discounted. They must be recorded on our ARBOR system and thoroughly investigated. Seeing and doing nothing is professionally indefensible.
- Every case of bullying must be followed up immediately.
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All suspected cases of bullying must be referred to a DSL.

1. Any adult witnessing must write an incident report (use school recording system) stating:
   - When?
   - Where?
   - What happened?
   - Who was involved?
   - How they dealt with it.
   - Action to be taken.

2. SLT must be informed of this, once the incident has been deemed as bullying then the incident must also be logged and reported during termly school governance meetings.

3. Victims need to be given support. They will need re-assurance that the matter will be dealt with discreetly and sensitively and that they will suffer no further occurrences of repercussions from disclosure. They are entitled to positive action: stopping the bullying immediately without implying that they are the cause of what has been done to them. It must be a priority to ensure that children who are victims of bullying are given structured support through education staff, therapy and parents/carers. This should be accomplished through the existing handover/daily home contact and referral systems already in place. As members of staff, we must ensure that this happens.

4. Adults dealing with an incident must not be physically or verbally aggressive towards the aggressor. We do, however, act very firmly and purposefully in our interventions with children who are producing anti-social hostile behaviour towards others.

5. The range of actions taken by the school is outlined in the school behaviour policy. Something must be done, even if it is only discussing the incident with the child and their parent at the end of the school day. All pupils must see that any form of bullying is taken seriously.

More severe incidents will be dealt with by senior staff. The parents, the Local Education Authority, and the social worker (if applicable), will be informed in writing by the Heads of School.

6. A fixed term exclusion will be considered when there are repeated incidences of bullying. The Heads of School or Director of School will make this decision, but it will only be used under very special circumstances (See Guidelines on Exclusion).

7. Stone Lodge School will not hesitate to exclude pupils whom they believe jeopardize the safety of other children or continually threaten their right to safety. Again, this will be used very infrequently and only after very careful consideration by staff and full consultation with parents and referring agencies. A safeguarding risk assessment will be completed before any pupil is excluded.

8. When a formal complaint of bullying is received either from a pupil or a parent and subsequently dealt with through the school's anti bullying procedures that is not the end of the matter. At the conclusion of the process the member of staff who has dealt with the complaint will use the school's Standard Satisfaction Survey for Parents to ensure that the parent is happy with the way the school's systems for dealing with bullying have worked and been effective. In the case of a child making a

complaint of bullying, the tutor will carry out individual work with that pupil to ensure that the pupil's complaints have been effectively dealt with and the child concerned has suffered no significant long-term harm.

9. Positive steps to prevent bullying:

Always be aware of the school's physical environment. It is difficult to specify where bullying is likely to occur in buildings and grounds such as ours, but by visiting 'quiet' locations frequently and by knowing where all the children you are responsible for are playing/occupied (and with whom), difficulties are less likely to occur. Staff should familiarize themselves with the area risk assessments that deal with location based bullying and ensure that the control measures detailed for each area of the school estate are followed.

Good supervision is a key requirement for controlling bullying behaviour and ensuring the safety and security of pupils. All colleagues will follow school policies with regard to supervision both during activities and especially during unstructured 'free time'. Stone Lodge School's Area Risk Assessments provide further information.

All staff must be vigilant for the early signs of distress in pupils.

For example: Isolation, a desire to remain with adults all the time, low attendance

Although these behaviours may be symptomatic of other problems, they may indicate that bullying is taking place.

Likewise everybody must be observant for any other indications that a child is being targeted.

For example: Personal equipment, belongings or clothes being 'lent' or going missing
Money received from home going quickly
Clothes being damaged
Bruising/injuries

Children must not 'buy off' the bully with sweets or other 'presents' and they must never give in to demands for money. They are strongly encouraged to talk to a member of staff.

Children are not encouraged to hit back. We are a 'talking' school and never advocate aggression as a means of solving problems. We seek to resolve conflict using a restorative approach.

Non-violent behaviour must be recognised and celebrated. The means of rewarding it are detailed in Stone Lodge School's behaviour and discipline policy.

The victims of bullies need their self-esteem raised through activities designed to improve their social skills. They need support from all the involved adults, both at school and at home, to counter feelings of inferiority and guilt. Suggestions for suitable activities and strategies are the responsibility of all staff and will be reflected in individual support work, individual education plans and tutorial work.

Any sexist or racist comments must be challenged. Once again, a failure to act implies concurrence. We have a very determined equal opportunities policy and the ethos we are trying to maintain is well documented.

Bullying **as a subject** will be addressed in the following ways:
Stone Lodge School's PSHE curriculum addresses the issue of bullying in various ways. It addresses the issue directly and attempts to make students aware of the issue and its implication for all concerned. It also attempts to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to deal with the various forms of bullying, which may occur. In Religious Education the emphasis is on care and respect for one another and an acceptance and acknowledgement of the different qualities each student brings to the school. In English opportunities which arise from the study of literature are used to examine bullying and its consequences. Science, Art, Music and Physical Education directly encourage teamwork and sharing, as do most other subjects on the curriculum. Cyber bullying is addressed in ICT lessons and standalone lessons around the issues relating to bullying take place during the year particularly during Anti Bullying Week every November.

10. Online Safety

The school recognises that bullying can occur through digital technologies and may take place outside school hours. Where online behaviour affects the safety, wellbeing or education of a pupil, the school may investigate and take appropriate action.

Staff will encourage pupils to:

• Report online concerns immediately

• Preserve evidence such as screenshots where appropriate

• Use privacy and reporting functions on digital platforms

• Seek support from trusted adults

Online safety education is delivered through the curriculum and wider safeguarding programme.

11. Bullying outside school premises

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The Head of School or DSL should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police. If the incident could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

12. Monitoring

The monitoring of bullying should have regard to information about incidents of bullying and how they were resolved, both immediately and over the longer term. Monitoring procedures can be used for two purposes:

- To enable schools to follow up and record progress.

  Individual incidents which, on the surface may seem to be an isolated occurrence, may be part of a much larger pattern of bullying behaviour. Monitoring can be helpful in identifying such patterns.

- To establish whether or not our anti-bullying practices are really being effective.

  Records of incidents can show whether bullying is becoming less frequent or changing in nature. The results can provide insights into ways in which practice needs changing or adapting.

  The monitoring of incidents will be carried out by the Behaviour Lead to highlight any patterns and information passed to SLT.

13. Evaluation

The policy will be deemed to be a success if:

- Staff are more vigilant and responsive to bullying.
- Fewer pupils report being bullied or that they are bullying.
- More pupils say that they would not join in bullying someone else.
- Pupils feel safe to attend school
- More pupils would tell a member of staff if they were being bullied.

14. Conclusion

In conclusion the following points are worth re-iterating:

1. Bullying does not stop of its own accord. It must be stopped by all staff acting with a common purpose, through a commonly understood set of procedures. There is likelihood it is ever-present and needs to be dealt with firmly and consistently as part of the therapeutic ethos of Stone Lodge School.

2. Younger children who are bullied tend to become older children who seek to bully others. We need to break this pattern. We need healthy traditions which can only emerge from children feeling safe within our environment. How children treat others depends very much on how they themselves are treated. We must at all times protect them from the bully.

3. All actions taken in response to any incident involving bullying must be clearly recorded with appropriate follow up and feedback to all parties involved.

4. Always report any incidents of bullying immediately to the Behaviour Lead, DSL or member of SLT.

Further advice and information for all staff and pupils can be found at

NSPCC – www.nspcc.org.uk

Childline – www.childline.org.uk

CEOP Safety Centre – www.ceop.police.uk

Report Harmful Content – www.reportharmfulcontent.com

Anti-Bullying Alliance – www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

15. Staff Protection (see Equal Opportunities Policy and Whistleblowing Policy)

Adults are entitled to the same consideration and protection as the pupils in Stone Lodge School. This includes adult to adult behaviour and pupil to adult behaviour.
The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for preventing and dealing with bullying and harassing behaviour. It is in the school's interests to make it clear to everyone that such behaviour will not be tolerated – the costs to the school may include poor employee relations, low morale, in efficiency and potentially the loss of staff.

16. Harassment

A definition of harassment as applied to age, sexual orientation, religion or belief and race and ethnic and national origin is:

Unwanted conduct that violates people's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Incidents should be reported in the first instance to the immediate line manager. Line managers are free to involve senior staff in investigations of incidents, but the individual member of staff has recourse to the full range of outside agency support. It is expected that such a step would only be taken after discussions with the Director of School.