



Anti-Bullying Policy

Independent school standard | KCSIE 2026 aligned

How SENtre prevents, recognises and responds to bullying, including cyberbullying and prejudice-based bullying

Organisation	SENtre
Policy owner	Head Teacher
Approved by	SENtre Proprietor Board
Safeguarding oversight	Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
Effective date	September 2026
Next review	September 2027, or earlier if guidance or legislation changes
Connected policies	Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, Equality & Diversity Policy, Complaints Policy, Whistleblowing Policy

Policy status: This is a new standalone policy for SENtre, setting out the anti-bullying strategy required by paragraph 10 of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and closing the cyberbullying and prejudice-based bullying coverage expected by Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

Introduction

SENtre is committed to providing a safe, supportive environment for every pupil. Bullying of any kind is never acceptable and stops pupils from thriving. This policy sets out our anti-bullying strategy, so far as reasonably practicable, in line with paragraph 10 of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and reflects the coverage of cyberbullying and prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying expected in a school's behaviour arrangements under Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026.

This policy is read alongside SENtre's Behaviour Policy, and any bullying incident that raises a safeguarding concern is also handled in line with SENtre's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.

Legal and Statutory Context

- Paragraph 10 of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, which requires an effective anti-bullying strategy;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, including its treatment of bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying) as a form of child-on-child abuse;
- the Equality Act 2010, and SENtre's duty not to discriminate against pupils with a protected characteristic; and
- DfE guidance, Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff (February 2024).

What Bullying Is

Bullying is behaviour that hurts, threatens, frightens or excludes another person, and that a reasonable person would recognise as likely to have that effect. It can be a single serious incident or something that happens repeatedly. It can take place face-to-face or online, and can include:

- name-calling, teasing, put-downs or threats made in person;
- hitting, tripping, pushing, kicking, or other physical behaviour;
- taking, hiding or damaging someone's belongings;
- excluding someone, spreading rumours, or turning others against them;
- abusive, threatening or humiliating messages, images or posts sent online, by phone, or through social media or gaming platforms (cyberbullying); and
- targeting someone because of who they are, or who they are perceived to be, including because of a protected characteristic such as race, religion, disability, sex, or sexual orientation (prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying).

Bullying does not need to be repeated to be taken seriously, and it does not need to be intentional for its impact to be real. Staff will always respond to the effect an incident has had on a pupil, not only to whether it fits a strict definition. Ordinary disagreements, arguments and falling-out between pupils are a normal part of growing up and are different from bullying — but where such behaviour is left unaddressed, it can develop into bullying, so staff remain alert to it.

Bullying between pupils is a form of child-on-child abuse. Any concern that suggests a pupil may be at risk of harm, rather than a straightforward bullying incident, is escalated to the DSL in line with SENtre's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.

Preventing Bullying

SENtre reduces the likelihood of bullying by building a strong, respectful school community. This includes:

- clear, consistently applied expectations of behaviour, set out in SENtre's Behaviour Policy;

- a curriculum that teaches pupils about respect, difference, and healthy relationships, including online;
- regular opportunities to celebrate pupils' achievements and contributions;
- staff who are visible, approachable, and alert to early signs of bullying; and
- working with parents and carers so that pupils receive consistent messages about acceptable behaviour at home and at school.

Reporting a Concern

Pupils, parents, carers or staff can report a concern about bullying to any member of staff, who will pass it to the pupil's key worker or the Behaviour Lead without delay. Pupils are encouraged to tell a trusted adult straight away, and are reassured that reporting bullying is never their fault and will always be taken seriously.

How SENtre Responds

Every report of bullying is investigated. Staff will:

- take the report seriously and establish the facts calmly and sensitively;
- keep the pupil who has been affected safe, and give them the chance to say how they would like the situation resolved;
- speak to the pupil whose behaviour is of concern, and help them understand the impact of what has happened;
- record the incident, including whether it involved a protected characteristic, in SENtre's behaviour log;
- inform parents or carers of everyone directly involved; and
- agree a plan to prevent recurrence, which may include restorative work, a change to supervision arrangements, or a period of increased support for either pupil.

Where appropriate, SENtre uses a restorative approach — bringing pupils together, once each is ready, to repair the relationship and agree how to move forward. Where a pattern persists, or the incident is serious, a sanction may also be applied in line with SENtre's Behaviour Policy. Where an incident involves an allegation of a criminal nature, or reveals a wider safeguarding concern, it is handled in line with SENtre's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, including referral to the DSL, the LADO, or the police as appropriate.

Prejudice-Based and Discriminatory Bullying

SENtre treats bullying connected to a protected characteristic — including race, religion or belief, disability, sex, gender reassignment, or sexual orientation — with particular seriousness, in line with the Equality Act 2010. All such incidents are recorded separately, reported to the Head Teacher, and reviewed by the Proprietor Board as part of SENtre's equality monitoring, so that any pattern can be identified and addressed.

Cyberbullying

Online spaces are part of pupils' everyday social lives, and bullying that happens there is addressed with the same seriousness as bullying that happens in person. SENtre supports pupils and parents to use technology safely and responsibly, and will investigate reports of cyberbullying — including where it occurs outside school hours or off SENtre premises — where it affects a pupil's welfare or the wider school community. Advice on keeping evidence (such as screenshots) will be given to families where relevant, and SENtre will work with parents, and where necessary the platform provider or police, to resolve serious incidents.

Supporting the Pupil Affected

The wellbeing of a pupil who has experienced bullying is SEntre's first priority. Support may include time with a trusted adult, involvement of peers in a supportive way, and — where needed — referral for specialist support. Staff monitor the situation to make sure it has genuinely been resolved, not just paused.

Supporting the Pupil Whose Behaviour Is of Concern

SENtre also supports the pupil whose behaviour has caused harm to understand why it was wrong and to change it. This may include a restorative conversation, a personalised plan to build empathy and self-regulation, or work with the pupil's family. Where the behaviour is linked to an identified SEND need, SEntre's response is planned with this in mind, in line with the Equality Act 2010 and SEntre's Behaviour Policy.

Recording and Monitoring

All bullying incidents, including cyberbullying and prejudice-based or discriminatory incidents, are recorded in SEntre's behaviour log. The Behaviour Lead reviews these records regularly to identify patterns by pupil, group, or protected characteristic. The Head Teacher reports on bullying incidents and trends to the Proprietor Board at least annually, alongside the reporting already required under SEntre's Behaviour Policy.

Policy Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Head Teacher and Proprietor Board, or sooner if there are changes to legislation, statutory guidance (including future editions of Keeping Children Safe in Education), or the needs of pupils attending SEntre.

Adopted by: SEntre Proprietor Board

Date: September 2026

Review date: September 2027