



Anti-Bullying Policy

Operational policy for students, parents/carers, staff and governors

Policy owner	Headteacher
Approved by	Governing Body
Approval date	October 2026
Review date	October 2027
Applies to	All students
Related ethos	Work Hard, Be Kind

Every student has the right to feel safe, respected and able to learn.

1. Purpose and principles

Diss High School is committed to a calm, safe and inclusive environment in which every student can learn and every member of staff can work without intimidation, harassment or abuse. Bullying is unacceptable and will be addressed promptly, fairly and proportionately.

This policy sits alongside the Behaviour for Learning Policy, the Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy, the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, the SEND Policy, the Equality Policy and the Online Safety arrangements. It applies to behaviour on the school site, during school activities, while travelling to or from school, and online or off site where the behaviour affects a student, a member of staff or the orderly life of the school.

The school will listen carefully, establish the facts, protect those at risk, address harmful behaviour and follow up to check that concerns have stopped. Support and sanctions may operate together. Restorative work will only be used when it is safe, appropriate and genuinely voluntary.

2. Legal and guidance framework

This policy has regard to:

- Department for Education guidance, Preventing and Tackling Bullying, as published on GOV.UK and updated in July 2026.
- Behaviour in Schools: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, including its provisions on child-on-child abuse, online safety, sexual harassment and sexual violence.
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006, including the duty to have measures that encourage good behaviour and prevent bullying.
- The Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- The school's duties under safeguarding, human rights, data protection and criminal law.

Where conduct may be criminal, presents a safeguarding risk or involves sexual harassment or sexual violence, the school will not treat the matter only as bullying. The relevant safeguarding, behaviour and external-agency procedures will also be followed.

3. What we mean by bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts, threatens, humiliates or frightens another person or group. It commonly involves an imbalance of power, which may arise from physical strength, social status, popularity, numbers, access to information or images, or the ability to target someone online.

The school will consider the pattern, context, intention, impact and power relationship. There is no fixed number of incidents or prescribed period that must pass before behaviour can be recognised as bullying.

3.1 Bullying, peer conflict and one-off incidents

Not every disagreement, unpleasant comment or friendship breakdown is bullying. An incident may instead be peer conflict, retaliation, an argument or isolated unkind behaviour. This distinction affects how the school understands and responds to the incident, but it does not make the behaviour acceptable or prevent a serious sanction.

A one-off incident may still constitute a serious breach of the Behaviour for Learning Policy, a safeguarding concern, discriminatory harassment, sexual harassment, violence or a criminal offence. Deliberate harmful online conduct can be repeated through sharing, reposting or continued access even when the original act happened once.

3.2 Forms of bullying

- Physical: hitting, kicking, pushing, unwanted physical contact, intimidation, taking or damaging belongings.
- Verbal: name-calling, threats, humiliation, taunting, offensive comments or spreading rumours.
- Social or relational: deliberate exclusion, coercion, manipulation, encouraging others to isolate someone, or damaging relationships or reputation.
- Online or cyberbullying: harmful messages, posts, images, videos, impersonation, group-chat behaviour, sharing private material or encouraging online abuse.
- Prejudice-based or discriminatory bullying: behaviour connected to actual or perceived protected characteristics or other aspects of identity or vulnerability.
- Sexual or sexist bullying: sexualised comments, rumours, harassment, unwanted conduct or coercion. These concerns will also be handled through safeguarding procedures.
- Bullying connected to SEND, disability, health needs, care experience, appearance, family circumstances or any other perceived difference.

4. Reporting concerns

Students are encouraged to report concerns early, whether the concern affects them or somebody else. A student may report to any trusted adult, including a form tutor, class teacher, Key Stage Co-ordinator, pastoral colleague, member of the Safeguarding Team, senior leader or peer mentor. Students may also use the school's agreed online reporting route or another published reporting mechanism.

Parents and carers should contact the student's form tutor or Key Stage team. They may also contact the school office by email at office@disshigh.co.uk or by telephone on 01379 642424. Reports should include as much factual information as possible, such as dates, times, locations, names, witnesses, messages, screenshots or links.

Staff must record and pass on concerns through the school's agreed systems. Bullying or potential safeguarding concerns must be recorded on CPOMS. Behaviour incidents and sanctions must also be recorded on Bromcom where appropriate. Staff must not promise confidentiality, but information will be shared only with those who need it to protect students and respond properly.

5. Responding to a report

The response will be proportionate to the nature, severity and urgency of the concern. Immediate safety and safeguarding needs take priority.

1. Listen and protect: take the report seriously, check immediate safety and identify any urgent medical, safeguarding or online-safety action.
2. Record: make an accurate record on CPOMS and, where appropriate, Bromcom. Preserve relevant digital evidence without unnecessarily copying or sharing harmful content.
3. Investigate fairly: obtain accounts from the reporting student, the student whose behaviour is being investigated and relevant witnesses. Review available records and evidence.
4. Assess: decide whether the evidence indicates bullying, peer conflict, an isolated incident, discriminatory behaviour, a safeguarding concern or another breach of policy. The school may conclude that more than one student has behaved poorly.
5. Act: put in place protection, support, education, supervision, reasonable adjustments and sanctions as appropriate. Contact parents/carers unless doing so would create a safeguarding risk or conflict with statutory guidance.
6. Follow up: identify a named member of staff, check that the behaviour has stopped, monitor safety and record the outcome and any further action.

The school will not require a student to meet the other student face-to-face, apologise publicly or participate in restorative work. Restorative activity will be considered only where it is safe, suitable and accepted by those involved.

6. Support and protective action

Support will be tailored to the circumstances and may include:

- A named trusted adult and planned check-ins.
- Changes to supervision, seating, movement, social-time arrangements or online contact.
- Pastoral, safeguarding, SEND or mental-health support and referral to external services where appropriate.
- Help to preserve evidence, report content to a platform, block contact or strengthen privacy settings.
- Work with parents/carers and, where relevant, the Designated Safeguarding Lead, SENCO, social worker or Virtual School Headteacher.
- A risk assessment or safety plan where there is continuing risk.

Protective arrangements will be reviewed so they do not unreasonably restrict the education or normal school experience of the student who has reported harm. The school will also consider support needed by the student whose behaviour has caused harm, without reducing accountability for that behaviour.

7. Sanctions and the Behaviour Pathway

Bullying is a breach of the Behaviour for Learning Policy. Sanctions will be based on the evidence and individual circumstances, including seriousness, persistence, impact, intent, previous incidents, response to intervention, SEND or disability, mental health needs, safeguarding vulnerabilities and any reasonable adjustments.

Possible responses include:

- Clear correction, education and restorative or reflective work.
- Detention, removal from lessons or placement in the Reflection Room.
- Loss of privileges, additional supervision or restrictions connected to the behaviour.
- Placement on, or movement through, the Behaviour Pathway.
- Suspension following a serious incident or persistent bullying.
- Permanent exclusion where the statutory tests are met, including after a single very serious incident or serious and persistent breaches.

Suspension and permanent exclusion will be considered only by the Headteacher or acting Headteacher and will follow the Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy. A suspension must not be used informally. Safeguarding separation is not a disciplinary sanction and must not be used as a substitute for suspension.

Students who witness, encourage, record, share or amplify bullying may also be sanctioned according to their individual conduct. A student who safely reports or seeks help will not be sanctioned merely for being present.

8. SEND, equality and safeguarding

The school will make reasonable adjustments and will consider whether behaviour may be linked to unmet SEND, disability, communication needs, mental health needs, trauma or safeguarding vulnerabilities. This does not prevent proportionate disciplinary action, but it informs the investigation, support and decision-making.

Prejudice-based incidents will be recorded and reviewed. The school will comply with the Equality Act 2010, including its duties to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Where bullying may amount to child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment, sexual violence, exploitation, hate crime or another safeguarding concern, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy will be involved. The school will consider referral to children's social care, the police or other agencies where appropriate.

9. Online and off-site bullying

The school may respond to conduct outside the school premises, including online behaviour, where it affects students, staff, the school community or the orderly running of the school. The school will work with parents, platforms, transport providers, the police or other agencies where necessary.

Students and parents should avoid replying to harmful content, forwarding it or arranging direct confrontation. Evidence should be preserved through appropriate screenshots, URLs, dates and account details, while avoiding further distribution of illegal or harmful material.

10. Staff, parents and other adults

Allegations that a member of staff has bullied or harmed a student will be managed under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the relevant staff procedures, not investigated solely under this policy.

Bullying or harassment of staff by students may be addressed under the Behaviour for Learning Policy as well as employment and safeguarding arrangements. Bullying or harassment involving employees, parents, carers, governors or other adults will be handled under the relevant staff conduct, grievance, complaints, parental conduct or trust procedures. The school will follow the Department for Education's 2026 guidance on preventing and tackling bullying and harassment of school staff where applicable.

11. Prevention and student voice

The school's preventative work includes:

- Explicit teaching through the curriculum, assemblies and tutor time about respectful relationships, prejudice, online conduct, consent, bystander behaviour and reporting.
- Anti-Bullying Week and student-led campaigns linked to the school ethos of Work Hard, Be Kind.
- Peer mentors and student leadership activity with clear safeguarding boundaries and adult oversight.
- Regular pupil voice, including surveys and discussion of where and when students feel more or less safe.
- Visible reporting routes and "You said, we did" feedback that protects confidentiality.
- Staff training and supervision informed by patterns in behaviour, safeguarding and attendance data.

The school will use the Anti-Bullying Strategy Statement and School Council Anti-Bullying Action Plan to support accessible student-facing expectations and meaningful pupil leadership.

12. Monitoring, confidentiality and complaints

Senior leaders will review bullying records at least termly to identify patterns, locations, repeat concerns, online themes and disproportionality affecting groups of students. Governors will receive appropriate anonymised information about implementation, trends and the impact of prevention work.

The school will communicate the outcome of a concern as fully as it lawfully can. Confidentiality and data-protection duties mean that the school may not disclose another student's personal information or the full detail of sanctions imposed.

A parent or carer who believes a concern has not been handled in accordance with this policy should first contact the relevant Key Stage Co-ordinator or senior leader. If the concern remains unresolved, the school's Complaints Policy may be used.

13. Responsibilities

Role	Key responsibilities
Headteacher	Ensure the policy is implemented, serious cases are overseen and suspension or permanent exclusion

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	decisions are made lawfully.
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Lead or advise where concerns involve child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment, exploitation, serious online harm or other safeguarding risk.
Pastoral and Key Stage teams	Coordinate investigation, communication, support, monitoring and recording.
All staff	Notice, challenge, report and record concerns; listen without dismissing; follow safeguarding and behaviour procedures.
Students	Treat others with respect, report concerns, avoid joining in or sharing harmful content, and support others safely.
Parents/carers	Report concerns promptly, preserve evidence, support agreed actions and avoid direct confrontation with other students or families.
Governing Body	Monitor implementation, patterns, equality and the effectiveness of prevention and response.

14. Related policies

- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy and SEN Information Report
- Equality Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct and relevant trust HR procedures