

FOOTSTEPS TRUST ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

1. Policy Statement

Footsteps Academy is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and respectful environment where all students feel valued and protected from bullying, harassment, intimidation and discrimination.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All concerns will be taken seriously, investigated promptly and responded to in a manner that protects the welfare, safety and dignity of all students.

This policy reflects the requirements of:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026
- Equality Act 2010
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- SEND Code of Practice
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying Guidance
- DfE Alternative Provision guidance

The policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equality Policy
- Attendance Policy

2. Aims

Footsteps Academy aims to:

- Prevent bullying and discriminatory behaviour.
- Promote positive relationships and mutual respect.
- Create a culture where students feel safe to report concerns.
- Ensure staff respond consistently and effectively.
- Protect vulnerable students and those with protected characteristics.
- Support all students affected by bullying.
- Meet safeguarding obligations where bullying places a child at risk of harm.

3. Definition of Bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group that intentionally hurts another person physically or emotionally.

Bullying is often:

- Repeated over time.
- Intended to cause harm.
- Difficult for the victim to defend against.
- Associated with an imbalance of power.

A single serious incident may be treated as bullying where the impact on the victim is significant.

4. Forms of Bullying

Bullying may include:

Physical Bullying

- Hitting
- Kicking
- Punching

- Pushing
- Damaging property

Verbal Bullying

- Name-calling
- Insults
- Threats
- Intimidation
- Derogatory comments

Emotional or Relational Bullying

- Exclusion
- Humiliation
- Rumour spreading
- Manipulation of friendships
- Coercive behaviour

Cyberbullying

Bullying through:

- Text messages
- Social media
- Email
- Gaming platforms
- Messaging applications
- Video-sharing platforms
- AI-generated images, recordings or content

Prejudice-Based Bullying

Bullying related to:

- Race or ethnicity

- Religion or belief
- Disability
- SEND
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Other protected characteristics

Child-on-Child Abuse

Some bullying behaviour may constitute safeguarding concerns, including:

- Sexual harassment
- Sexual violence
- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Online abuse
- Coercive and controlling behaviour

Such incidents will be managed in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

5. Recognising Bullying

Indicators may include:

- Anxiety or withdrawal.
- Reduced attendance.
- Refusal to attend school.
- Emotional distress.
- Loss of confidence.
- Unexplained injuries.
- Changes in behaviour.
- Falling academic performance.

- Social isolation.
- Damage to belongings.
- Fear of using technology.
- Self-harm concerns.

These signs do not automatically indicate bullying but should prompt further investigation.

6. Responsibilities

Principal

Will:

- Promote a whole-school anti-bullying culture.
- Ensure policy implementation.
- Monitor incidents and trends.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Will:

- Assess safeguarding risks.
- Ensure appropriate referrals are made.
- Maintain accurate records.
- Support staff in managing concerns.

Staff

Will:

- Challenge inappropriate behaviour.
- Listen to students.
- Record incidents.
- Follow safeguarding procedures.
- Promote positive behaviour.

Students

Date of Issue: September 2026

Date of Review: September 2027

Will:

- Treat others respectfully.
- Report bullying concerns.
- Support peers appropriately.
- Follow academy expectations.

Parents and Carers

Will:

- Report concerns promptly.
- Support the Academy's actions.
- Encourage respectful behaviour.

7. Prevention

Footsteps Academy will prevent bullying through:

Curriculum Education

- Personal Development
- PSHE
- Relationships Education
- Online Safety Education
- British Values

Academy Culture

- Positive behaviour promotion
- Restorative approaches
- Student voice opportunities
- Celebration of diversity
- Staff role modelling

Online Safety

Students will learn about:

- Cyberbullying
- Online exploitation
- Safe use of social media
- Harmful online content
- Misinformation and disinformation
- Responsible digital behaviour

8. Reporting Bullying

Students may report concerns to:

- Any member of staff
- Tutor or mentor
- Academy Leader
- DSL
- Principal
- Through academy reporting systems

Concerns may be raised by:

- Students
- Parents/carers
- Staff
- Referring agencies
- Other professionals

All reports will be taken seriously.

9. Responding to Bullying

Stage 1: Initial Response

- Ensure immediate safety.
- Listen to all parties.
- Record concerns.

Stage 2: Investigation

- Gather evidence.
- Speak with those involved.
- Consider witness accounts.
- Review any digital evidence.

Stage 3: Safeguarding Assessment

The DSL will determine whether:

- Child protection procedures apply.
- External agencies should be involved.
- Additional risk assessments are required.

Stage 4: Intervention

Actions may include:

- Restorative meetings.
- Behaviour support plans.
- Educational sanctions.
- Mediation.
- Additional supervision.
- Support from external agencies.

Stage 5: Review

- Monitor outcomes.
- Support students involved.

- Review effectiveness of interventions.

10. Supporting Students

Students Experiencing Bullying

May receive:

- Pastoral support.
- Regular check-ins.
- Counselling.
- Wellbeing interventions.
- Safety planning.

Students Displaying Bullying Behaviour

May receive:

- Restorative interventions.
- Behaviour support.
- Mentoring.
- Emotional regulation support.
- Targeted intervention programmes.

The focus will be on accountability, education and positive behaviour change.

11. Recording and Monitoring

The Academy will:

- Record all incidents.
- Monitor patterns and trends.
- Track prejudice-based incidents separately.
- Record safeguarding actions taken.
- Review data as part of safeguarding monitoring.

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Senior leaders will regularly evaluate the effectiveness of anti-bullying measures.

12. External Support

Support and advice may be sought from:

- Anti-Bullying Alliance
- Kidscape
- Childline
- NSPCC
- CEOP (Thinkuknow)
- Local Authority Services
- Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

13. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- Annually.
- Following changes to legislation.
- Following updates to KCSIE.
- After significant incidents where lessons can be learned.