Digitech Studio School

Anti-Bullying Policy

Date reviewed: July 2025

Review Date: July 2026

Introduction

This policy has been written to reflect ongoing developments with Anti-Bullying nationally. Specifically, the policy reflects updates in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025 update), The DFE publication 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying', the Human Rights Act 1998 (protected characteristics), and the work of the Anti-Bullying Alliance.

This document sets out the school's policy in relation to the issue of bullying. It reflects a belief that bullying is not acceptable under any circumstances and that it is best prevented through the development of a school ethos based on respecting others and equality. It also acknowledges that bullying behaviour is problematic for the victim and perpetrator alike and embodies support and management strategies that are pragmatic and non-oppressive.

Roles

Principal: Chris Ballard
Head of School: Simon Jones
Behavioural Lead: Mike Edwards
Head of Key Stage 4: Sarah Bennett
Head of Key Stage 5: Collen Lichfield
Pastoral Leads: Alice Smith, Kelly Dodge, Steph Balmond

Principles

- All students have an absolute right to be educated in a safe and secure environment and to be protected from others who may wish to harm, degrade, or abuse them.
- There is no justification whatsoever for bullying behaviour and it should not be tolerated in any form, particularly and including any bullying which is against the Human Rights Act 1998 (protected characteristics).
- Bullying behaviour is a problem for both the victim and the bully and should be addressed in positive and constructive ways which provide opportunities for growth and development for the individuals involved.
- Effective management of bullying is a shared responsibility, and strategies should involve school staff and students, parents/carers, and other professionals.
- It is important to invest time and resources in the prevention and management of bullying. Staff and students require advice, training, and support to manage it with confidence.

Digitech Code (Excellence, Trust, Aspire)

Our behaviour system promotes positive relationships and behaviour.

Aims and Objectives

- To achieve the school's ethos in which each student is safe and able to realise their full potential within an environment in which bullying is seen as inappropriate and unacceptable.
- To demonstrate to parents/carers that the school takes their children's welfare seriously, by having zero tolerance towards bullying behaviour.
- To have clear and consistent procedures for responding to incidents of bullying.

Strategies

In order to meet our aims, we intend to:

- Be proactive in the prevention of bullying.
- Raise awareness among staff, parents/carers, and students about the issue of bullying and the school's attitude towards it.
- Accurately record all incidents of bullying and monitor the effectiveness of strategies for bringing it under control.
- Make students, parents/carers, and staff aware of what steps to take when an incident of bullying has occurred.
- Reassure victims that actions will be taken to keep them safe.
- Demonstrate to bullies that their behaviour is unacceptable, address their problematic behaviour in a fair and firm manner, provide them with support, and enable them to change.

Definition

The DfE defines bullying as behaviour by an individual of group, repeated over time, that is intended to hurt or harm another individual or group, either physically or emotionally. There is often an imbalance of power in situations of bullying. Bullying is often aimed at certain groups, for example because of their race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.

Bullying behaviour

Direct or indirect:

- Direct forms include physical violence and threats, verbal assaults and taunts, the destruction of property, extortion, unwanted sexual interest, or contact.
- Indirect forms include ignoring and the withdrawal of friendship, excluding, malicious gossip and spreading rumours, abusive or oppressive graffiti, or electronic messages/websites.

Cyber-bullying

This is a discrete area of focus for the school, involving the Community Police Officers where appropriate.

Digitech Studio School takes all forms of bullying seriously and is particularly concerned to any incidents which involve racist, sexist, or homophobic elements. These will be addressed and recorded accordingly (as outline below).

Prejudicial Bullying

Definition

Prejudicial bullying involves targeting individuals or groups based on characteristics such as race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or any other aspect of their identity. This type of bullying is rooted in biases and stereotypes and can have severe emotional and psychological impacts on the victims.

Examples of Prejudicial Bullying (not a limiting list)

- **Racial Bullying**: Insults, slurs, or physical aggression based on race or ethnicity.
- **Religious Bullying**: Mockery, exclusion, or threats due to religious beliefs or practices.
- **Gender-Based Bullying**: Harassment or discrimination based on gender or gender identity.
- **Sexual Orientation Bullying**: Homophobic or transphobic remarks, exclusion, or physical harm due to an individuals sexual orientation.
- **Disability Bullying**: Teasing, exclusion, or physical aggression towards individuals with disabilities.

Response and Support

- **Immediate Action**: Address incidents of prejudicial bullying promptly and ensure the safety of the victim.
- **Support and education**: Where appropriate offer support for victims and educational sessions for perpetrators to address underlying biases.

- **Reporting Mechanisms**: Prejudicial bullying will be logged under a separate category in the bullying tracker and recorded into CPOMS.
- **Parental Involvement**: Engage parents in discussions about prejudicial bullying and collaborate on strategies to address it.

Bullying outside of school site

School staff members have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises, including online conduct. Times that schools might sanction pupils for include misbehaviour include:

- when taking part in any school-organised or school-related activity
- when travelling to or from school
- when wearing school uniform
- when in some other way identifiable as a pupil at the school
- that could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school
- that poses a threat to another pupil
- that could adversely affect the reputation of the school.

This may include bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre. Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and acted on. In incidents where the bullying occurs outside of school the Principal should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police. While school staff have the power to discipline pupils for bullying that occurs outside school, they can only impose the disciplinary sanction and implement that sanction on the school premises or when the pupil is under the lawful control of school staff, for instance on a school trip. Digitech has the power to sanction pupils for misbehaviour outside of the school premises to such an extent as is reasonable.

Digitech Studio School's Anti-Bullying Charter

Our anti-bullying approach is underpinned by our school behaviour system of Ready-Respectful-Safe:

Ready - we are all clear about what is classed as bullying and know how to respond/react.
Respectful - we respect each other's differences and celebrate these.
Safe - we keep each other safe by not being bystanders, challenging others appropriately, and reporting any concerns we have.

Scope

This policy applies to incidents of bullying which take place on the school premises or outside of school. The school is always interested in the welfare and conduct of its students and will respond positively to any information it receives about bullying outside school if it impacts student well-being or education.

If there are concerns about a student's safety outside the school, parents/carers would be advised to contact the local police. If concerns arise in relation to school transport (on trips), the school will raise the issue with the appropriate transport company and seek its help in dealing with the problem. If students are being bullied by students of another school, the Head and pastoral leads of that school will be informed, and we will work together to resolve the matter.

Prevention

All staff involved in the education and/or supervision of students will be made aware of the issue of bullying and the need to apply the school's policy of zero-tolerance consistently when episodes of bullying are witnessed or reported. Staff will constantly reinforce the message to students that bullying is unacceptable and will take positive action to prevent and control it.

In addition, the issue of bullying will be raised with students at multiple levels, including:

- Whole school level: Through assemblies when children will be informed of the school's zero-tolerance policy and the actions that will be taken to prevent bullying taking place.
- Classroom level: During tutor time and Digitech Plus lessons (where sections of time will be dedicated to anti-bullying). Outside agencies/groups may be used to reinforce the message.
- Individual level: Students who are felt to be at risk of bullying (or who have suffered from bullying in the past) will be offered additional support and guidance from the Pastoral team. Students who have bullied others will be given advice and support and taught strategies to enable them to bring their unacceptable behaviour under control and to prevent further incidents.

The school recognises that there are times when and places where students may be more vulnerable to bullying – lunch and break times and the beginning and end of the school day. Arrangements ensure that there is adequate supervision available to reduce the risk of bullying incidents.

Students will be encouraged to talk to staff about incidents of bullying which they experience or of which they may be aware. In these circumstances, staff will respond positively, take the expression of concern seriously, and ensure that the matter is fully investigated.

Parents who believe their children are the victim of bullying should share their concerns with the school at the earliest opportunity and be prepared to work with the school to keep their children safe in the future. All expressions of concern will be taken seriously and investigated. Similarly, if parents believe their child is bullying others, this information should be shared with the school so that the problem can be addressed and a plan agreed upon to prevent further incidents and help the bullying child change behaviour.

Escalation of Sanctions for Suspected Bullying

Some forms of bullying can be subtle and therefore hard to clearly identify. In these instances, Digitech has included support and monitoring focusing on these behaviours. If there is a suspected incident of subtle bullying then the pastoral team will review and discuss the incident applying actions in line with the stages set out for the Bully (below post-incident responses: for the bully). Given the challenge in spotting subtle bullying movement along the stages will be reviewed and agreed by the pastoral team.

Parent Involvement

Digitech Studio School is firmly committed to working in partnership with parents/carers and believes that the best outcomes emerge when professionals and parents/carers are able to work together when bullying occurs. We recognise the important influence parents/carers have on their children and would wish to enlist their support when their child is involved in bullying – either as a victim or perpetrator.

Implementation

The school is committed to creating a bully-free environment and will ensure that its zero-tolerance policy is applied. This means that all incidents of bullying identified or reported will be investigated and appropriate sanctions/support put in place where bullying is present. All staff involved in the teaching and/or supervision of students will take responsibility for addressing incidents and will ensure that the victim receives the required support. The bully will be informed of the unacceptability of their behaviour and a record will be made of the incident. Sanctions and support will be put in place for the bully. All students are made aware that staff need to be informed of any incidents or concerns and that action will be taken when bullying is reported.

Post-Incident Responses

For the Victim – The below may be used to support students

- When a member of staff receives information, either directly or indirectly, that a child may have been the victim of a bullying incident, this report will be taken seriously and investigated.
- The school will offer a sympathetic and supportive response to students who are the victims of bullying. The nature of the response will be determined by the situation and the student's individual needs. Responses may include:
- Positive reinforcement that reporting the incident is the correct thing to do
- Reassurance that the victim is not responsible for the behaviour of the bully
- Reassurance that the victim will be involved in the resolution
- Action to stop the incident and secure the student's safety
- Informing/involving parents/carers
- Adult mediation between the perpetrator and the victim (provided this does not increase the victim's vulnerability)
- Support from an outside agency such as a Connexions Personal Advisor, who may be able to provide assertiveness training
- Befriending/peer monitoring/mentoring
- Creation of a support group/triad of support
- Extra supervision/monitoring
- Arrangements to review progress

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For the Bully

There is a clear graduated response to address bullying, when it is proven that bullying has occurred (repeated, targeted, and with an imbalance of power). The graduation is outlined in the table below:

Suspected Bullying – Initial Concerns	When suspected bullying is first identified, a meeting with the student(s) involved will be held. A warning will be issued, and the students will be reminded of the school's anti-bullying policy. The student will be placed onto step 1 of the step system.
Suspected Bullying – Sustained monitoring	If further incidents occur, the suspected bully will be closely monitored by staff. This may involve regular check-ins with a designated staff member and increased supervision during vulnerable times (breaks, lunchtimes). The time frame of the monitoring phase will be agreed. Student will move onto Step 2 of the step system.
First Occurrence of Bullying	A behaviour contract is drawn up and signed by the school, perpetrator, and parents. At SLT discretion a 1 week placement at another school could be initiated. Student placed onto Step 3
Second Occurrence of Bullying	A sanction will be imposed. This will be proportionate and may include the loss of social times for a determined length of time, and a placement in another school for up to 2 weeks could be initiated. Student placed onto Step 4
Repeated failure to stop bullying	If the student does not respond accordingly, they will be sanctioned accordingly. At this level, it is likely to be an OSD (if two have not previously been completed) or permanent exclusion, in extreme cases. Student placed onto Step 5

For the Bully in Prejudicial incidents

There is a clear graduated response to address bullying, when it is proven that bullying has occurred (repeated, targeted, and with an imbalance of power). The graduation is outlined in the table below:

Suspected Bullying – Initial Concerns	When suspected bullying is first identified, a meeting with the student(s) involved will be held. A warning will be issued, and the students will be reminded of the school's anti-bullying policy. The student will be placed onto step 1 of the step system.
Suspected Bullying – Sustained monitoring	If further incidents occur, the suspected bully will be closely monitored by staff. This may involve regular check-ins with a designated staff member and increased supervision during vulnerable times (breaks, lunchtimes). The time frame of the monitoring phase will be agreed. Student will move onto Step 2 of the step system.
First Occurrence of Bullying	A behaviour contract is drawn up and signed by the school, perpetrator, and parents. At SLT discretion a 1 week placement at another school could be initiated. Student placed onto Step 3
Second Occurrence of Bullying	A sanction will be imposed. This will be proportionate and may include the loss of social times for a determined length of time, and a placement in another school for up to 2 weeks could be initiated. Student placed onto Step 4
Repeated failure to stop bullying	If the student does not respond accordingly, they will be sanctioned accordingly. At this level, it is likely to be an OSD (if two have not previously been completed) or permanent exclusion, in extreme cases. Student placed onto Step 5

Once an incident or suspect incident of bullying has occurred and a student has been placed on the step system they will be monitored of a period of 3 months. If not further incidents or suspected incidents occur they will then move down to the step below and a further 3 month monitoring period will be started.

The RRS steps are set out below:

Digitech STUDIO SCHOOL — **Ready Respectful Safe**

Steps	Behavioural Criteria	Lesson truancy Criteria	Lates to lesson (per term)	Phones	Anti-bullying (Step lowers after 3 month period of no incidents)
Step 0	Largely meeting expectations	0 Incidents of internal truancy	0 Minutes late	0 incidents	0 incidents
Step 1	2 code 5s or 3 code 4s or 2 CONBEH	1 Incident of lesson truancy within a week	30 Minutes of lates within a week	2 incidents PhoneH Or Refused to hand over phone	Suspected bullying incident
	Discussion with pastoral lead				
Step 2	Second week of above	Second week of above	Second week of above	Second week of above	Continued suspected bullying
	Phone call home – Pastoral lead				
Step 3	Third week of above	Third week of above	Third week of above	Third week of above	Bullying incident 1
	Phone call home – KS4 Lead				Formal meeting with KS4 Lead— Behaviour contract drawn up Potential immersion at another school—1 Week
Step 4	Fourth week of above	Fourth week of above	Fourth week of above	Fourth week of above	Bullying incident 2
	PS Meeting – KS4 Lead				Formal meeting with AP —Potential immersion at another school—2 Weeks
Step 5	Fifth week of above	Fifth week of above	Fifth week of above	Fifth week of above	Bullying incident 3
	PSP meeting and further intervention – AP Behaviour				Formal meeting with Principal of school and potential permanent exclusion

In addition to the above graduated response, the following sanctions may also be applied to support the restoration of the relationship:

- Adult mediation between the perpetrator and the victim (provided this is safe for the victim)
- Support in alternative ways of behaving.
- Rewards/positive reinforcement for students to promote change and bring unacceptable behaviour under control.
- Loss of lunch/break-time privileges.
- A fixed period suspension.
- Removal from class/group.
- Withholding participation in a trip, sports, or other out-of-school activity.
- Completion of a Risk Assessment for the students involved.
- ‘Off-Site’ Direction for up to 4 weeks.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Each incident of bullying, or suspected bullying, will be recorded by the school on CPOMS and in the “anti-bullying” tracking spreadsheet. Any incidents with a racist, sexist, or homophobic element will be identified and also recorded on this platform.
- Bullying and suspected bullying will be tracked on a spreadsheet to ensure monitoring over the duration of a student's time at Digitech Studio School.
- A termly and annual report will be made to the Academy Council indicating trends that may emerge.
- Senior Staff and Councillors will evaluate the effectiveness of the policy and agree on adjustments that may be necessary to address any current concerns. These will be shared with staff, parents/carers, and students.

Staff induction and reinduction

Staff will be inducted into the anti-bullying policy on the first TD of Term 1 prior to students attending school. Re-induction will be completed at the start of Term 3 and Term 5. A survey will be completed after the inductions and reinductions to ensure staff understanding.

Student induction and reinduction

Students will be inducted in their first assembly of Term 1 and assemblies at the starts of both Term 3 and 5. Student voice will be completed following the assemblies to ensure that students are aware of their role in anti-bullying.

Academy Council

Details on the anti-bullying policy and updates on anti-bullying data will be regularly shared with the academy council via Termly meetings with the SLT.