

Preventing and Tackling Bullying Policy

Effective from: 29 August 2025

Last reviewed: 1 December 2025

Next review due: August 2026



KING'S COLLEGE SCHOOL

PANAMA

School Ethos

King's College School Panama is committed to providing a safe, respectful and inclusive environment where bullying in any form is not tolerated. We recognise that bullying, if unaddressed, can have a serious and lasting impact on a child's wellbeing, learning and personal development. Preventing and responding to bullying is therefore central to ensuring that all students feel safe, valued and able to achieve their full potential.

Our school ethos is guided by the following principles:

- We promote positive relationships and a culture of kindness, respect and inclusion at all levels of school life.
- We create an environment in which students feel confident to report concerns, knowing they will be taken seriously and that issues will be handled sensitively and fairly.
- We recognise that some students may be more vulnerable to bullying and ensure appropriate support is provided.
- We act promptly, proportionately and consistently when bullying is identified.
- We work in partnership with parents to support students and maintain a shared approach to promoting positive behaviour.
- We review our practice regularly to ensure continuous improvement and alignment with BSO standards and Inspired Education expectations.
- We draw on external safeguarding expertise and best practice across leading British international schools.

This ethos reflects our commitment to safeguarding, wellbeing and the highest standards of pastoral care, ensuring that all students can learn, grow and thrive within a supportive and nurturing community.

Policy Objectives

This policy outlines the approach King's College School Panama will take to prevent and address all forms of bullying.

This policy reflects King's College School Panama's commitment to promoting a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for all. The school is committed to fostering an anti-bullying culture in which the bullying of adults, children or young people is not tolerated in any form.

As part of this commitment, the school will involve students in reviewing and discussing the meaning of this policy to strengthen their understanding and promote a consistent approach across the community.

This policy is based on DfE guidance July 2017: [Preventing bullying - GOV.UK](#) and supporting documents. It also takes into account the DfE statutory guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#).

Definition of bullying

Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online" (*Antibullying Alliance, 2022*).

Bullying can involve direct acts of aggression, such as hitting someone, as well as indirect acts, such as spreading rumours (*EduCare, 2021*).

Further definitions:

- Bullying is "behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally". (*DfE "Preventing and Tackling Bullying", July 2017*).
- Bullying can include face-to-face acts such as name-calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, kicking, hitting, taking belongings, producing offensive graffiti, gossiping, excluding others from groups and spreading hurtful or

untruthful rumours.

- These behaviours can also occur online (cyberbullying). This includes sending offensive, upsetting or inappropriate messages via phone, text, instant messaging, gaming platforms, websites, social media or apps, as well as sharing offensive or degrading photos or videos.
- Bullying can be a form of child on child abuse. It may be emotionally abusive and can have severe, lasting effects on a child's wellbeing and emotional development.
- It is also important to recognise the difference between intent and impact. While bullying behaviour is often intentional, the impact on the child who experiences it is paramount. Behaviour that causes significant harm or distress may be treated as bullying even when the student did not intend to cause hurt.

Forms of bullying covered by this policy:

Bullying can happen to anyone. This policy covers all forms of bullying, including:

- Bullying related to race, religion, nationality or culture
- Bullying related to Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND)
- Bullying related to appearance or physical or mental health conditions
- Bullying related to sexual orientation (homophobic bullying)
- Bullying of young carers or bullying linked to home circumstances
- Sexist, sexual or transphobic bullying.

Bullying behaviours can take many forms, including:

- Online bullying (cyberbullying): any form of bullying behaviour carried out through electronic means
- Physical: physical assault or threats of harm
- Verbal: name-calling, insults or other verbal abuse
- Emotional or social: social exclusion, tormenting, hiding belongings, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidation, manipulation or coercion
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive sexual comments, sexual harassment, homophobic language or exposure to inappropriate content
- Technology-facilitated abuse: the use of AI or digital tools to create doctored images, deepfakes, or to harass, intimidate or threaten others.

(Antibullying Alliance, 2022; EduCare, 2021)

Roles in bullying (Educare, 2021; Salmivalli, 2010):

Bullying is not a simple interaction between a perpetrator and a target. It is a complex psychosocial phenomenon that involves a range of roles within a group dynamic. These can include:

- Perpetrators: individuals who initiate or carry out the bullying behaviour
- Targets: individuals who experience bullying behaviour
- Reinforcers: those who support, encourage or reward the perpetrator's behaviour, including through laughter, comments or engagement
- Bystanders: those who witness bullying but do not intervene, either in person or online
- Defenders or Upstanders: individuals who support the target, challenge harmful behaviour or seek help from an adult

Bullying dynamics can also be influenced by peer pressure, particularly in online environments such as WhatsApp or other group chat platforms. This may include encouraging harmful behaviour, excluding others, or sharing passwords or login information, all of which can increase risk and vulnerability.

Consequences of bullying:

Repeated exposure to bullying can have significant long-term effects on a child's physical, social and emotional wellbeing. Research indicates increased risks of anxiety, low mood and difficulties in peer relationships when bullying is sustained (*Juvonen & Graham, 2014*).

Legislation and Guidance

Although King's College School Panama operates outside the United Kingdom, the school aligns its policies and practices with UK legislation and guidance that reflect best practice in safeguarding and anti-bullying. The following documents inform this policy (this list is not exhaustive):

- Education and Inspections Act 2006 and 2011 amendments
- Equality Act 2010
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Online Safety Act 2023
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Public Order Act 1986.

Note: UK criminal legislation does not apply directly in Panama. However, these documents provide widely recognised standards that guide the school's safeguarding culture and expectations.

Links with other school policies and practices:

This policy should be read alongside the following related school policies and procedures:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)
- Online Safety
- Mobile Phone and Electronic Policy
- Data Protection Statement
- Inclusion Policy
- PSHE / SEL Curriculum Policy
- Complaints Policy.

Roles and Responsibilities in Preventing and Addressing Bullying

Preventing bullying and responding effectively when it occurs is a shared responsibility. All members of the school community contribute to creating a safe, respectful and inclusive environment.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL has overall responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including matters related to bullying and online safety. The DSL:

- Oversees the school's response to all reported bullying concerns
- Ensures incidents are recorded, monitored and escalated appropriately
- Liaises with staff, parents and external agencies as required
- Ensures that staff receive training in recognising and reporting bullying
- Monitors patterns and trends through safeguarding systems.

At King's College School Panama, the Designated Safeguarding Lead is Mrs Zoe Pett.

Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

The SLT ensures effective implementation of this policy. The SLT:

- Reviews the policy regularly and ensures alignment with Inspired and BSO standards

- Monitors the effectiveness of prevention and intervention strategies
- Ensures appropriate training and resources are in place
- Promotes a whole-school culture in which bullying is not tolerated
- Ensures reporting and recording procedures are robust and consistent.

Teaching and Support Staff

All staff play an active role in preventing and addressing bullying. Staff are expected to:

- Model positive, respectful behaviour at all times
- Remain vigilant to signs of bullying or peer conflict
- Report concerns promptly to the DSL or via MyConcern
- Record incidents accurately and factually
- Support students who report bullying
- Help create an environment where students feel safe to speak up.

A full description of safeguarding responsibilities is outlined in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Students

Students are expected to contribute to a school culture where bullying is not tolerated. Students should:

- Treat others with kindness and respect
- Speak up if they experience or witness bullying
- Act as Upstanders by supporting peers and seeking adult help
- Use digital technology responsibly and report harmful online behaviour
- Follow school procedures when raising concerns.

Parents and Guardians

Parents and guardians play an essential role in supporting the school's anti-bullying culture. They are expected to:

- Reinforce the importance of respectful behaviour at home and online
- Monitor their child's use of digital platforms and group chats
- Report concerns to the school promptly
- Work collaboratively with staff to resolve concerns
- Support the school's policies, values and procedures.

The School

As an organisation, King's College School Panama is responsible for:

- Promoting a safe and inclusive environment where bullying is not tolerated
- Providing clear policies, procedures and training for staff
- Ensuring concerns are taken seriously and acted upon promptly
- Teaching students about respectful relationships, digital citizenship and the role of Upstanders
- Monitoring patterns and responding to emerging trends
- Maintaining accurate safeguarding and behaviour records.

Responding to Bullying

When a bullying concern is reported or identified, the school follows a structured response to ensure that all students are supported, incidents are investigated thoroughly and appropriate actions are taken.

1. Immediate Response

- Any member of staff who witnesses or receives a report of bullying will take immediate action to ensure the student is safe and supported
- The student experiencing bullying will be offered reassurance and appropriate support.
- The staff member will report the concern to the relevant pastoral or safeguarding lead without delay.

2. Initial Assessment and Safeguarding Considerations

- The Pastoral Lead, Head of School, Designated Safeguarding Lead or another member of the leadership team will be notified and will make an initial assessment of the concern.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed where any safeguarding risks are present, including online harm or possible child on child abuse.
- Where necessary, immediate protective measures will be put in place to ensure the student's safety.

3. Investigation

- The Pastoral Lead, Head of School, DSL or relevant senior leader will interview all parties involved, including witnesses where appropriate.
- The school will inform relevant staff members and parents or carers where appropriate to support a coordinated response.
- All students involved will be given the opportunity to share their perspective in a safe and structured setting.

4. Actions, Support and Sanctions

- Sanctions will be applied in accordance with the Behaviour Policy, taking account of age, understanding and proportionality.
- Support plans will be put in place for the student who experienced bullying and where required for the student who engaged in bullying behaviour.
- If necessary, external agencies may be consulted, including the police (if a potential criminal offence has occurred) or local safeguarding services (if a child is at risk of significant harm).

5. Incidents Outside School

- Bullying that occurs off-site or outside school hours, including cyberbullying, will be fully investigated.
- Appropriate action will be taken in school, including support and sanctions, in line with the Behaviour Policy.

6. Record-Keeping

- A clear and factual record of the incident, decisions made and actions taken will be recorded in accordance with safeguarding and behaviour procedures.

7. Restorative Approaches

Where appropriate, and only when all students feel safe and supported, the school may use restorative conversations to help repair relationships, build understanding and prevent further incidents. Restorative approaches:

- Will never replace sanctions when these are required
- Will only be used when all parties agree to participate
- Will only be used when staff are satisfied that a power imbalance can be safely managed.

Supporting Pupils

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Reassurance that their concern is taken seriously and that ongoing support is available
- An immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a trusted adult, including the DSL if appropriate
- Guidance on recording incidents and discussing safe responses
- Support to rebuild confidence and self-esteem
- Ongoing pastoral support which may include structured check-ins, counselling or engagement with parents and carers
- Involvement of external professionals where specialist help is needed.

Pupils who have engaged in bullying behaviour will be supported by:

- Discussing the incident to help them understand its impact and the need for change
- Involvement of parents or carers
- Education and guidance, including around respectful relationships and digital citizenship

- Requests for removal of harmful online content where relevant
- Sanctions in line with the Behaviour Policy, including loss of privileges or other proportionate consequences
- Referral to external agencies where needed, for example psychological services or law enforcement.

Supporting Adults

Adults (staff or parents) who have experienced bullying will be supported by:

- An opportunity to discuss the concern with the DSL, a senior leader or the Head of School
- Advice on documenting incidents and discussing safe and appropriate responses
- Investigation of concerns that occur off-site or online in line with the Behaviour Policy
- Support in reporting inappropriate online content to service providers
- Reassurance, confidentiality (as appropriate) and signposting to support services
- Referral to external agencies where needed.

Adults who have perpetrated bullying may:

- Meet with a senior leader or the Head of School to establish the facts
- Be directed to the Complaints Policy if the concern raised constitutes a legitimate grievance
- Be required to remove inappropriate online content
- Be subject to disciplinary, civil or legal action where behaviour breaches school expectations.

Cyberbullying

When responding to concerns about cyberbullying, the school will ensure that all incidents are treated with the same seriousness as face-to-face bullying.

The following actions will be taken:

- Act swiftly as soon as a concern is reported or identified
- Provide support for the student who has experienced cyberbullying and work with the student responsible to prevent recurrence
- Encourage those affected to retain evidence (such as screenshots) to support the investigation
- Take reasonable steps to identify those involved, including reviewing use of school devices and systems
- Contact IT services, online platforms or the police when necessary
- Work with service providers to limit the spread of harmful content and support its removal
- Confiscate and search electronic devices in line with Panamanian law and the school's Searching and Confiscation Policy
- Request deletion of locally-held or published content that breaches school behavioural expectations
- Apply sanctions in accordance with the Behaviour Policy and ensure the student responsible receives guidance and any required support
- Inform the police where a criminal offence may have been committed
- Provide staff, parents and students with guidance on protecting themselves online, including blocking contacts and managing privacy settings

Preventing Bullying

King's College School Panama is committed to proactive, whole-school strategies that prevent bullying and promote a culture of respect, safety and inclusion. Prevention is central to our safeguarding approach and reflects both BSO expectations and our school values.

Environment

The whole school community will:

- Create and uphold an inclusive environment that promotes mutual respect, consideration and care for others

- Recognise that bullying can be perpetrated or experienced by any member of the school community, including adults and children (child on child abuse)
- Discuss and celebrate differences between people that may otherwise motivate bullying, including religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality, appearance and family circumstances, such as young carers or looked-after children
- Challenge language and behaviour that does not align with our values of respect and non-discrimination
- Promote responsible and positive use of technology, including mobile phones and social media
- Work with staff, families, the wider community and external agencies to prevent and address all forms of prejudice-driven bullying
- Create safe spaces and supportive environments for vulnerable pupils
- Celebrate achievements to build confidence, strengthen relationships and reinforce a positive school ethos.

Policy and Support

The school community will:

- Provide accessible, confidential and child-friendly ways for pupils, staff and parents to report concerns and seek support
- Regularly review and update practice to reflect developments in technology and best practice in online safety
- Take appropriate and proportionate action for any bullying concern that affects a student, including behaviour off-site or online
- Apply disciplinary sanctions in line with the Behaviour Policy, ensuring consequences reflect the seriousness of the incident
- Use a range of strategies to resolve conflict and restore relationships, where this is safe and appropriate

Education and Training

The school community will:

- Ensure all staff receive regular training to recognise, prevent and respond to all forms of bullying, including online harm, discrimination and child on child abuse.
- Embed anti-bullying education across the curriculum, assemblies, displays, tutor programmes and student leadership opportunities.
- Provide structured opportunities to develop pupils' social and emotional skills, resilience, empathy and self-esteem.

Involvement of Pupils

We will:

- Involve pupils in shaping policies and decisions to ensure they understand the school's approach to preventing bullying and their role within it
- Regularly gather pupil voice to understand the extent, nature and experience of bullying across the school
- Ensure pupils know how to report worries or concerns and who they can speak to
- Ensure pupils understand the range of sanctions that apply to bullying behaviour
- Involve pupils in whole-school anti-bullying campaigns and embed key messages throughout the curriculum
- Provide support to pupils who experience bullying and those who engage in bullying behaviours, ensuring both groups receive guidance to address underlying issues.

Involvement of Parents

We will:

- Involve parents and carers in developing and reviewing policies to ensure shared understanding of the school's expectations
- Make key information about bullying readily available in accessible formats, including clear points of contact
- Ensure all parents know who to contact if they have concerns about bullying and where to access independent advice
- Work with parents and the wider community to address issues beyond the school gates that may contribute to bullying
- Support parents to model respectful and positive behaviour, both online and offline
- Ensure all parents understand the school's complaints procedure and how to use it appropriately when raising concerns.

Monitoring and Review: Putting the Policy into Practice

King's College School Panama is committed to ensuring that this policy is implemented consistently and effectively across the school. Regular monitoring and review form an essential part of our safeguarding and pastoral systems and reflect both BSO expectations and Inspired Education standards.

The school will:

- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy through behaviour records, safeguarding data, pupil voice, staff feedback and parental concerns
- Ensure that all staff apply the policy consistently and follow agreed procedures in every case
- Identify emerging patterns or areas of concern and incorporate these into the school's pastoral and strategic action planning
- Ensure the Head of School is informed of significant bullying concerns, incidents and trends, as appropriate
- Ensure the Designated Safeguarding Lead reviews bullying data regularly as part of wider safeguarding monitoring
- Report termly to the Inspired Global Head of Safeguarding on the number, nature and outcomes of bullying incidents, including actions taken and any areas that may require further attention
- Review this policy annually, or sooner if needed, to reflect evolving best practice, guidance and safeguarding requirements.

This monitoring and review process ensures that anti-bullying practice at King's remains robust, consistently applied and reflective of our commitment to continuous improvement.

Useful Links and Supporting Organisations

The following organisations provide reputable guidance on bullying prevention, online safety and child wellbeing. While some are UK-based, their resources reflect widely recognised international best practice.

Anti-Bullying and Wellbeing

- Anti-Bullying Alliance – www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- Childline – www.childline.org.uk
- Kidscape – www.kidscape.org.uk
- Young Minds – www.youngminds.org.uk

Online Safety

- Childnet International – www.childnet.com
- ThinkUKnow (CEOP) – www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- UK Safer Internet Centre – www.saferinternet.org.uk

SEND Support

- Mencap – www.mencap.org.uk
- Changing Faces – www.changingfaces.org.uk

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- Educate Against Hate – www.educateagainsthate.com
- Show Racism the Red Card – www.srrc.org/educational
- Stonewall – www.stonewall.org.uk

A fuller range of recommended guidance can be found in the DfE publication “[Preventing and Tackling Bullying](#)” (2017).

This policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier if required in response to changes in statutory guidance, safeguarding expectations or BSO standards.

Appendix 1: Student Guide to Preventing and Tackling Bullying

What bullying is

Bullying is when someone keeps hurting, embarrassing or upsetting another person on purpose. It can be:

- Physical
- Verbal
- Social (leaving someone out on purpose)
- Online (messages, images, videos).

If someone feels scared, embarrassed or targeted, it must be taken seriously.

What bullying is not

- Accidents
- One-off arguments
- Falling out between friends
- Jokes that both people find funny.

If someone is unsure, they should still talk to an adult.

What to do if you experience or witness bullying

- Tell a trusted adult straight away
- Speak to your tutor, Head of Year or the school counsellor
- Report it on MyConcern through a member of staff
- Keep any screenshots or messages if the bullying is online
- Do not reply or retaliate.

You will always be listened to and taken seriously.

What the school will do

- Make sure you are safe
- Speak to everyone involved
- Contact your parents if needed
- Put support in place
- Take action with anyone who has bullied someone else
- Follow up to check things are improving.

Your role in preventing bullying

Every student at King's is expected to:

- Treat others with kindness
- Include others and challenge unkind behaviour
- Use technology responsibly
- Speak up if something does not feel right.

Being an Upstander means helping someone who needs support and never staying silent when someone is being hurt.

If you bully someone

The school will:

- Speak with you to understand what happened
- Put support in place to help you change behaviour
- Contact your parents
- Apply consequences if needed
- Expect you to repair harm where appropriate.

Everyone has the chance to improve and make better choices.