

Discrimination, Racism and Bullying Prevention Policy

The Sittingbourne School



Approved by: Lynn Lawrence

Date: July 2026

Next review due by: July 2027



The Sittingbourne School: Discrimination, Racism and Bullying Prevention Policy

Introduction

Swale Academies Trust and The Sittingbourne School are committed to creating a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students. We believe that bullying, discrimination, and racism are unacceptable and will not be tolerated in any form. This policy outlines our approach to preventing, identifying, and responding to these issues.

What is Discrimination, Racism and Bullying (DRB)?

- **Discrimination:** Treating someone unfairly because of a protected characteristic, such as race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity.
- **Racism:** Prejudice or discrimination directed at someone based on their race or ethnicity.
- **Bullying:** Repeated, aggressive behaviour used to intimidate, hurt, or control another person. This can be physical, verbal, emotional, or social.

Forms of DRB

This policy covers all forms of DRB, including:

- **Racial bullying:** Name-calling, teasing, threats, or violence based on race or ethnicity.
- **Disability-based bullying:** Mocking or excluding someone because of a disability.
- **Homophobic/transphobic bullying:** Bullying based on sexual orientation or gender identity.
- **Sexist or sexual bullying:** Unwanted sexual comments or advances.
- **Misogyny:** Hatred or contempt for women. This can include verbal abuse, threats, intimidation, and physical violence.
- **Misandry:** Hatred of, contempt for, or prejudice against men or boys. It is the male-focused counterpart to **misogyny**.
- **Discrimination based on Religion:** Treating someone differently because of their religion or beliefs. This can include exclusion, harassment, and denial of opportunities.
- **Extremism:** Holding extreme political or religious views that promote violence or hatred.
- **Body Image Bullying:** Making negative comments about someone's appearance, weight, or size.
- **Cyberbullying:** Using electronic communication to bully someone, such as through text messages, social media, or online gaming. (To prevent cyberbullying and distractions, all electronic devices must be powered off and stored securely in bags upon entering school grounds and remain so throughout the entire school day, including breaks and lunch. Please refer to our mobile phone and electronics policy)
- **Bullying:**

Forms of Bullying

Bullying can happen to anyone and can take many forms. At The Sittingbourne School, we categorise these behaviours to ensure they are identified and addressed correctly:

1. Physical & Verbal Bullying

- **Physical:** Kicking, hitting, or taking belongings.
- **Verbal:** Name-calling, taunting, mocking, or making offensive comments.



- **Indirect:** Spreading hurtful and untruthful rumors, gossiping, or excluding people from groups.

2. Prejudice-Based Bullying (Linked to Protected Characteristics)

This involves any bullying related to:

- **Identity:** Race, religion, culture, or sexual orientation (homophobic/biphobic).
- **Gender:** Including sexist/sexual bullying and transphobic bullying.
- **Personal Circumstances:** Special educational needs, appearance, health conditions, or being a young carer/looked-after child.

3. Cyberbullying & Online Harassment

Cyberbullying involves harassment linked to electronic means, often facilitated through mobile phones and social media. It is distinct because it can follow a student into their home environment. This includes:

- **Direct Harassment:** Sending offensive, intimidating, or degrading text/instant messages.
- **Visual Misuse:** Sharing or producing embarrassing, hurtful, or degrading images/videos without consent.
- **Digital Exclusion:** Intentionally excluding someone from online groups or activities.
- **Impersonation:** Creating fake profiles or impersonating someone online to damage their reputation.

4. Child-on-Child Abuse

The Sittingbourne School recognises that children can abuse their peers and that this is a significant safeguarding issue. This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

- **Recognition of Risk:** We recognise that bullying, especially when repeated or involving protected characteristics, can constitute child-on-child abuse.
- **Forms of Abuse:** This includes, but is not limited to, physical abuse, sexual harassment, sexual violence, "upskirting," and initiating or joining in with cyberbullying.
- **Zero Tolerance for "Banter":** The school does not dismiss abusive behaviour as "banter," "just a part of growing up," or "boys being boys".
- **Victim-Centered Support:** Our response to bullying is always tactful and protective toward the victim. Pastoral staff and the Mental Health and Wellbeing Team provide targeted interventions to support the emotional welfare of those affected.
- **Perpetrator Support and Sanction:** While perpetrators will face the school's system of sanctions, they will also be offered strategies within the Mental Health Programme to address the root causes of their behaviour and reduce the prevalence of further incidents.

5. Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying, involving harassment linked to electronic means, often facilitated through mobile phones and social media.

This can include:

- Sending offensive or intimidating text messages or messages on social media platforms.
- Sharing embarrassing or hurtful photos or videos of others online without their consent.
- Excluding someone from online groups or activities.
- Impersonating someone online to make them look bad.

Preventing DRB

We take proactive steps to prevent DRB through:

- **Social and emotional learning:** We integrate lessons that develop respect, empathy, and responsible behaviour.



- **Year team:** This dedicated team addresses incidents of prejudice and promotes positive school culture.
- **Assemblies and Personal Development Time (PDT):** We raise awareness about DRB through regular assemblies and activities during character education and Personal Development Time.
- **Staff training:** Staff are trained to recognize and respond to DRB effectively.

Identifying and Responding to DRB

We encourage students to report DRB incidents to a trusted adult in school or through the online DRB reporting system.

Our response will include:

- **Investigating the incident:** We will investigate all reported incidents thoroughly and confidentially.
- **Supporting the victim:** We will provide emotional and academic support to the victim.
- **Addressing the perpetrator:** We will take appropriate disciplinary action against the perpetrator, which may include restorative justice practices.
- **Parental involvement:** We will keep parents informed and involved throughout the process.

Student Involvement

Students play a vital role in preventing DRB by:

- **Reporting incidents:** Reporting DRB when they see it happen to themselves or others.
- **Supporting each other:** Creating a culture of kindness and respect.
- **Participating in anti-DRB initiatives:** Participating in activities and programs that promote a positive school climate.

Reporting Discrimination, Racism and Bullying

To report discrimination, racism, and bullying (DRB) at Sittingbourne School, you have two main options:

1. **Speak to Any Adult in School:** students can report DRB incidents by speaking to any adult in the school. This could be a teacher or any staff member you feel comfortable talking to about the issue.
2. **Report Online:** Another option is to report DRB incidents online. Students can do this by clicking on the blue DRB icon on their homepage. This will lead students to a form where they can provide details of the incident. The Year team will then review the report and provide support as quickly as possible.

Why Reporting DRB Online or to Staff is Preferred:

Reporting DRB incidents online or to school staff rather than parents calling or messaging the school parents directly is important for several reasons:

1. **Confidentiality:** Reporting online or to staff ensures confidentiality and privacy for the student reporting the incident. This can be crucial in sensitive situations like DRB.
2. **Immediate Support:** By reporting to staff or online, the Year team can respond quickly and provide support to address the DRB incident promptly.
3. **Professional Handling:** School staff are trained to handle DRB incidents professionally and can take appropriate actions to address the issue effectively.



4. Maintaining a Safe Environment: Reporting to staff or online helps in maintaining a safe and supportive environment within the school community, promoting a zero-tolerance policy towards DRB.

Sanctions and Disciplinary Procedures

The Sittingbourne School employs a firm but fair system of sanctions to address bullying. These measures are designed to stop the behaviour, protect the victim, and ensure the perpetrator understands the impact of their actions.

Tiered Disciplinary Response

Sanctions are applied based on the severity, intent, and frequency of the bullying:

Initial Intervention: For first-time incidents or those involving "unkindness" rather than persistent bullying, students are given the opportunity to adjust their behaviour through restorative conversations led by the Member of Staff or Year Team.

Formal Sanctions: If bullying continues or is severe, the school will utilise its standard system of sanctions, which may include detentions, internal exclusion, or suspension.

BEHAVIOURAL TIER ESCALATION PATHWAY

TIER LEVEL	BEHAVIOURAL TRIGGER (NEW INCIDENT)	COMPLIANCE FAILURE TRIGGER (FAILURE TO ATTEND)	STAFF ACTION & SANCTION OUTCOME
 Tier 1	1st Incident: Low/mid-level discriminatory language or action.	<i>None (Starting Point)</i>	Member of Staff (MOS): Logs incident on tracker; holds formal conversation with student. 
 Tier 2	2nd Incident: Repeat of discriminatory language or action.	Failed Tier 1: Refused or did not attend the formal conversation.	Year Team: Escalation to a structured DRB reflection session and reflection pack. 
 Tier 3	3rd Incident: Persistent pattern of discriminatory language/action.	Failed Tier 2: Did not attend or complete the DRB reflection session.	Senior Leadership (SLT): Thursday after-school detention (ASD) + extended intervention & dialogue. 
 Tier 4	4th Incident: Chronic non-compliance and resistance to interventions.	Failed Tier 3: Did not attend the Thursday after-school detention (ASD)	Year Team / SLT: Saturday School Intervention + IER - PDT - 4:10pm (Education Pack)  
 Tier 5	Ongoing Severe Behaviour: No improvement shown despite all prior interventions.	Failed Tier 4: Did not attend the Saturday School Intervention	Head of Year (HOY): Internal Suspension escalation.  

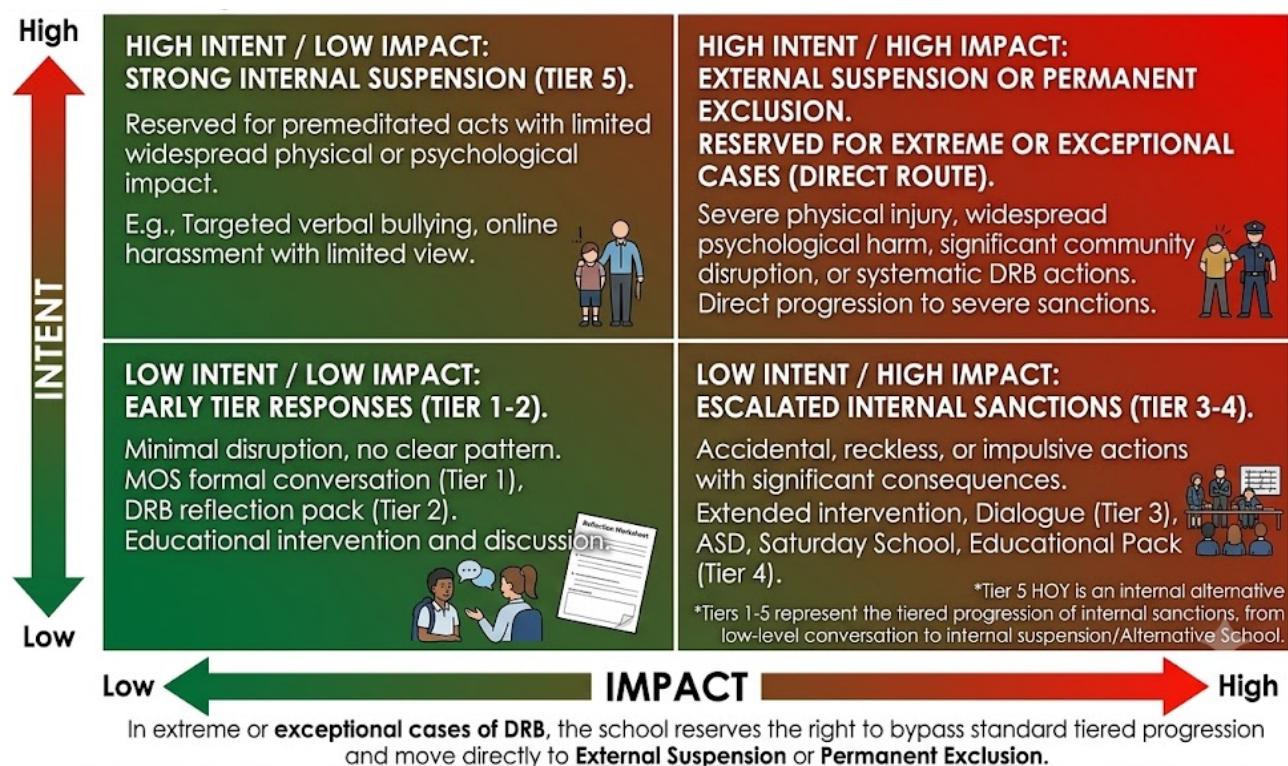
THE CRITICAL BYPASS RULE.

If a student's **very first incident** involves targeted hate speech, severe discriminatory harassment, or actions causing immediate safety risks, the school reserves the right to bypass Tiers 1–5 entirely and issue: **Immediate External Suspension or Permanent Exclusion.** (No Alternative School mentioned).

Serious Incidents: In cases of ongoing harassment or severe physical/sexual bullying, the school will support parents/guardians in filing a formal complaint to the police.



When deciding whether to use standard tiered sanctions (Tiers 1-5) or severe sanctions (External suspensions/Permanent Exclusion) for DRB incidents, leaders will always consider the impact and intent. See below for DRB guidance



Special Sanctions for Cyberbullying

Because digital harassment can be invasive and damaging, specific measures apply to cyberbullying:

- Device Search: If a student is suspected of cyberbullying, their mobile phone may be searched for content.
- Account Investigation: Students involved in online harassment can expect their social media accounts to be screened or investigated.
- Phone ban: students found to have bullied a student using their mobile phone will lose the privilege of being allowed their phone on the school site.
- Off-site Jurisdiction: The school maintains the right to sanction students for bullying that occurs off-site or online when it is brought to the attention of pastoral teams.



Monitoring and Escalation

- **Digital Tracking:** All reported incidents via the DRB icon are logged and reviewed by the Year team to track patterns of behaviour.
- **Governor Oversight:** The Headteacher and School Governors regularly review the application of these sanctions to ensure they are being used effectively and fairly.

Liaison with Parents and Carers

We work collaboratively with parents by:

- **Providing clear communication:** Keeping parents informed about the school's DRB policy and reporting procedures.
- **Working together:** Partnering with parents to address DRB concerns.
- **Promoting positive behaviour:** Encouraging parents to model respectful behaviour at home.

Monitoring and Review

We will regularly review and update this policy to ensure its effectiveness. We will also monitor reports of DRB to identify trends and implement additional support strategies.

Responsibilities

Everyone in the school community has a responsibility to prevent DRB. This includes:

- **School governors:** Monitoring and reviewing the policy.
- **Headteacher and senior leaders:** Implementing the policy and providing leadership.
- **Teaching and non-teaching staff:** Recognising and responding to DRB incidents.
- **Students:** Reporting DRB and creating a positive school climate.
- **Parents/Carers:** Supporting the school's efforts and modelling positive behaviour.

Further Support

Students and parents can find additional support from the following resources:

- Anti-Bullying Alliance (<https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>)
- Childline (<https://www.childline.org.uk/>)
- UK Safer Internet Centre (<https://saferinternet.org.uk/>)

This policy builds upon and strengthens our existing anti-bullying policy. We are committed to providing a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students.

Details regarding student behaviour and engagement, and the use of mobile and electronic devices are outlined in the School Behaviour Policy and Mobile and Electronic Devices Policy, respectively.

Links to other Sittingbourne School policies

School Equality policy:

<https://www.thesittingbourneschool.org.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=308&type=pdf>



School Behaviour policy:

<https://www.thesittingbourneschool.org.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=307&type=pdf>

Mobile Phone policy:

<https://www.thesittingbourneschool.org.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=294&type=pdf>

Child Protection and Safeguarding policy:

<https://www.thesittingbourneschool.org.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=292&type=pdf>

Online Safety policy:

<https://www.thesittingbourneschool.org.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=320&type=pdf>

The named contact for this policy within each school is the designated Headteacher.

Department for Education Guidance

The school uses the guidance by the DFE to inform its action planning to prevent and tackle bullying.

DFE Guidance "Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools"

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/625ee64cd3bf7f6004339db8/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every year. This is so that it remains up to date, useful, and relevant. We will also regularly review it in accordance with local and national policy changes.

Useful link to support

- Anti-bullying alliance (www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)
- Childline (www.childline.org.uk)
- UK Safer Internet Centre (www.saferinternet.org.uk/)
- Educate against Hate (www.educateagainsthate.com/)
- End Violence Against Women (www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/)
- NSPCC (www.nspcc.org.uk/)
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Appendix 1: legal ages of social media sites

Social Media Site	Minimum Age
Facebook	16
Instagram	16
Twitter	16
TikTok	16
X (formerly Twitter)	16



Snapchat	16
Youtube	16

Following the UK government's landmark announcement, major social media networks are legally required to block accounts for anyone under the age of 16. This effectively establishes a strict **16 and over** threshold for mainstream social browsing, with full implementation expected to roll out by **Spring 2027**.