



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

1. Policy Statement

Malvern College is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and respectful community in which every pupil feels valued, supported and able to flourish. Positive relationships, kindness and mutual respect are fundamental to College life and underpin our approach to education, boarding and safeguarding.

Bullying, harassment, intimidation and victimisation are incompatible with these values and will not be tolerated. We recognise that bullying can have a significant impact on a child's wellbeing, confidence, educational progress and mental health. In some cases, bullying may also constitute child-on-child abuse, discriminatory behaviour or criminal conduct. Every concern is therefore considered through both a safeguarding and pastoral lens, with the welfare of the child always being paramount.

The College believes that preventing bullying is more effective than responding to incidents after they occur. We therefore place particular emphasis on creating a culture in which pupils feel safe, known and respected, understand their responsibilities towards one another and are confident to seek help. Through a strong speak up culture, pupils are encouraged to raise concerns about themselves or others at an early stage, knowing that they will be listened to and taken seriously.

As a boarding school, we recognise the unique opportunities and responsibilities that come from living together as a community. We actively promote kindness, empathy, inclusion and personal responsibility through our pastoral systems, comprehensive induction programme, Living Together sessions for new boarders, Lower Sixth leadership and safeguarding training, our trained Peer Mentors, the Life Skills programme and the positive example set by staff and senior pupils. The College is committed to:

- promoting a culture of kindness, respect and inclusion;
- preventing bullying through education, leadership and early intervention;
- encouraging pupils to speak up without fear of embarrassment or retaliation;
- responding promptly, fairly and consistently to all concerns;
- supporting pupils who experience bullying;
- helping pupils whose behaviour has caused harm to understand its impact and make positive changes;
- working in partnership with parents and external agencies where appropriate; and
- reviewing practice regularly to ensure that our safeguarding arrangements remain effective.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Every member of staff has a duty to promote pupils' welfare, identify concerns at an early stage and act in accordance with this policy and the College's Safeguarding Policy.

2. Legislative and Regulatory Framework

This policy has been developed with regard to the following legislation and statutory guidance (as amended):

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (Department for Education, 2026)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (Department for Education, 2026)
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (Department for Education, updated 2026)
- Behaviour in Schools (Department for Education, 2024)
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation (Department for Education, 2023)
- Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes: Advice for Education Settings Working with Children and Young People (UK Council for Internet Safety, 2024)
- Boarding Schools: National Minimum Standards (2022)
- Equality Act 2010
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997

This policy should be read alongside the College's:

- Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy;
- Child-on-Child Abuse Policy;
- Promoting Good Behaviour and Discipline Policy;
- Online Safety Policy;
- Acceptable Use of ICT Policy;
- Staff Code of Conduct;
- SEND Policy;
- Missing Pupil Policy; and
- Complaints Procedure.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all pupils attending Malvern College, whether they are boarders or day pupils.

It applies to behaviour:

- on College premises;
- within boarding houses;
- during lessons, co-curricular activities and educational visits;
- whilst travelling to and from College where appropriate;
- online, including social media, messaging services, gaming platforms and emerging digital technologies; and
- outside College where there is a sufficient connection to the College or where behaviour has an actual or potential impact on the safety, wellbeing or reputation of members of the College community.

The College reserves the right to investigate and take appropriate action in respect of behaviour occurring outside College where this is necessary to safeguard pupils, maintain good order and discipline or protect members of the College community.

4. Definition of Bullying

The Department for Education defines bullying as: *behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.*

Bullying is typically characterised by behaviour that is:

- deliberate;
- hurtful;
- repeated, or highly likely to be repeated;
- involves an imbalance of power.

That imbalance of power may arise from a range of factors, including age, physical strength, popularity, seniority, disability, special educational needs, race, religion, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, online anonymity or possession of sensitive personal information.

Bullying may take many forms, including:

- physical bullying;
- verbal bullying;
- social or relational bullying;
- cyberbullying;
- prejudice-based bullying relating to protected characteristics or perceived differences.

The College recognises that a single serious incident may constitute bullying, child-on-child abuse or another safeguarding concern where it causes, or is intended to cause, significant harm, fear, humiliation or exploitation.

5. Distinguishing Bullying from Other Behaviour

Not all unkind behaviour constitutes bullying. Staff will use professional judgement when considering concerns and determining the most appropriate response.

Behaviour	Typical characteristics	College response
Conflict	A disagreement between pupils of broadly equal power. May involve arguments or differing opinions.	Support pupils to resolve the disagreement and rebuild positive relationships.
Relational conflict	Friendship difficulties, fallings out or social tensions that may be upsetting but do not involve a deliberate pattern of harm or an imbalance of power.	Pastoral support, guidance and monitoring where appropriate.
Unkind behaviour	Isolated incidents of poor behaviour, insensitive comments or thoughtless actions.	Address promptly through pastoral or behavioural intervention. Repeated incidents may indicate emerging bullying.
Bullying	Deliberate behaviour, usually repeated, involving an imbalance of power and intended to cause physical or emotional harm.	Investigated in accordance with this policy with appropriate safeguarding, support and disciplinary action.
Child-on-child abuse	Serious behaviour causing, or likely to cause, significant harm, including coercion, intimidation, harmful sexual behaviour or abuse.	Managed in accordance with the College's Safeguarding and Child-on-Child Abuse Policies with immediate involvement of the DSL.

Even where behaviour does not meet the definition of bullying, it will be addressed appropriately. Staff will remain professionally curious and alert to repeated low-level concerns which may indicate emerging bullying or wider safeguarding issues.

6. Preventing Bullying

The College believes that the most effective way to reduce bullying is to create a culture in which pupils feel safe, valued, included and confident to speak up. Preventing bullying is therefore everyone's responsibility and is embedded throughout the life of the College rather than delivered through isolated events.

The College promotes a culture of kindness, respect and inclusion through:

- a strong speak up culture, where pupils are encouraged to report concerns about themselves or others without fear of embarrassment or retaliation;
- positive relationships between pupils and staff, with every pupil knowing trusted adults they can approach for support;

- a comprehensive induction programme for all new pupils, introducing College expectations, boarding life, support systems and how to seek help;
- Living Together – junior pupil sessions to reflect on boarding house life, led by trained senior pupils, which explore common boarding issues such as borrowing possessions, banter, room-sharing, group chats, inclusion and where to seek help before difficulties escalate;
- All Lower Sixth pupils receive Leadership and Safeguarding Training during their Lower Sixth year in anticipation that all Sixth Form pupils will take on leadership roles in some aspect of their time at Malvern College. Training includes:
 - recognising bullying and child-on-child abuse;
 - safeguarding responsibilities;
 - maintaining appropriate professional boundaries;
 - promoting inclusion and positive relationships;
 - encouraging younger pupils to speak up; and
 - knowing when concerns should be referred to staff.
- The College operates a well-established Peer Mentoring programme as part of its commitment to promoting wellbeing and preventing bullying. Peer Mentors are carefully selected senior pupils who receive comprehensive training before undertaking the role, including Mental Health Training and DEI training alongside safeguarding and listening skills. Peer Mentors provide an approachable source of support for younger pupils, helping them to settle into College life, develop positive relationships and seek help at an early stage if they have concerns. They do not replace professional pastoral support but complement the College's wider safeguarding and wellbeing systems by encouraging pupils to access appropriate help whenever it is needed.
- the Life Skills programme, Assemblies, Chapel, tutor periods and boarding activities, which provide age-appropriate education on respectful relationships, online safety, digital citizenship, diversity, consent and the impact of bullying;
- regular reminders about the different ways pupils can seek help, including House staff, Tutors, the Safeguarding Team, Counsellors, Independent Listeners, Peer Mentors, Prefects and Whisper, the College's confidential online reporting system;
- regular staff training to ensure bullying, child-on-child abuse and emerging safeguarding concerns are recognised and addressed promptly.

Particular attention is given to pupils who may be more vulnerable, including new pupils, boarders, pupils with SEND, international pupils and those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. The College regularly reviews its pastoral provision and listens to pupil voice to ensure that its preventative work remains effective.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Preventing bullying is everyone's responsibility. Every member of the College community has a role in creating a safe, respectful and inclusive environment.

The Governing Body provides strategic oversight and monitors the effectiveness of the College's safeguarding and anti-bullying arrangements.

The Head has overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented effectively across the College.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) oversees the safeguarding aspects of bullying concerns, ensures that appropriate action is taken where child-on-child abuse or other safeguarding issues are identified, and works with external agencies where necessary.

The Deputy Head oversees the implementation of this policy, ensuring that concerns are investigated consistently, appropriate outcomes are reached and bullying trends are monitored.

The Head of Pupil Guidance leads the operational response to bullying concerns, coordinating investigations, working closely with House staff and the Safeguarding Team, advising on appropriate pastoral and disciplinary outcomes, and helping to ensure that pupils receive appropriate support throughout and following any investigation.

Housemasters, Housemistresses, Tutors and all staff are responsible for promoting a positive culture, recognising and responding to concerns, supporting pupils and reporting safeguarding concerns promptly in accordance with College procedures.

Pupils are expected to treat others with kindness and respect, contribute to the College's Speak Up culture, support one another appropriately and report concerns about themselves or others.

Parents are encouraged to work in partnership with the College by raising concerns promptly and supporting the College's efforts to promote respectful relationships.

8. Reporting Concerns

Every member of the College community shares responsibility for maintaining a safe environment. Pupils are encouraged to report concerns as early as possible, whether they relate to themselves or another pupil. The College actively promotes a speak up culture, making clear that seeking help is responsible and courageous. Pupils are encouraged never to ignore concerns or assume that someone else will report them.

Pupils can seek support from:

- Housems, Deputy Housems and House staff;
- Tutors;
- the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSLs;
- The Pastoral Team, including Head of Pupil Guidance, Director or Pastoral Welfare and SENCO;
- College Counsellors;
- The Medical Centre;
- Independent Listeners;
- trained Peer Mentors;
- Prefects and other trained pupil leaders; or
- Whisper, the College's confidential online reporting system.

Whisper enables pupils to report concerns confidentially and, if they wish, anonymously. While anonymous reports may limit the College's ability to investigate fully, every report is reviewed carefully and acted upon where possible.

Parents, staff and visitors are also encouraged to report concerns promptly.

Any member of staff receiving a report will listen carefully, reassure the pupil that they have done the right thing by speaking up, explain that the concern will be shared only with those who need to know, and ensure that it is passed promptly to the appropriate member of staff.

Where there is any indication that bullying may amount to child-on-child abuse or another safeguarding concern, the matter will be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in accordance with the College's Safeguarding Policy.

All concerns are recorded appropriately and monitored to identify patterns, recurring concerns or wider safeguarding issues.

9. Responding to Concerns

The safety and wellbeing of pupils will always be the College's first priority. All concerns will be considered promptly and proportionately. Where appropriate, immediate action will be taken to safeguard pupils, provide support and prevent further harm.

The College will determine whether the concern represents:

- conflict or friendship difficulties;
- unkind behaviour;
- bullying;
- child-on-child abuse; or
- another safeguarding concern.

Bullying investigations are normally coordinated by the Head of Pupil Guidance in partnership with the Safeguarding Team and relevant House staff. Where appropriate, parents will usually be kept informed by the Housemaster throughout the process. All concerns are recorded appropriately in accordance with the College's safeguarding procedures. Where behaviour may constitute child-on-child abuse or another safeguarding matter, the College will respond in accordance with its Safeguarding Policy.

10. Outcomes and Support

The College seeks outcomes that both safeguard pupils and promote positive behavioural change.

Responses will always be proportionate, taking account of:

- the seriousness of the behaviour;
- its impact on those involved;
- safeguarding considerations;
- any imbalance of power;
- previous concerns;
- SEND or other individual needs.

Where appropriate, outcomes may include:

- pastoral support;
- educational or reflective work;

- restorative approaches;
- behaviour monitoring;
- disciplinary sanctions;
- safeguarding intervention; or
- referral to external agencies.

Restorative approaches may be used where appropriate but will never replace safeguarding measures or be used where there is coercion, intimidation or a significant imbalance of power.

Support will be offered to pupils who have experienced bullying, pupils whose behaviour has caused harm and, where appropriate, other pupils affected by the incident.

11. Bullying Beyond the College and Online

The College recognises that bullying may occur beyond the College site, particularly through digital technology. Where behaviour outside College has a sufficient connection to the College community or affects the welfare of pupils, it will be investigated and addressed in accordance with this policy.

Through the Life Skills programme and other pastoral opportunities, pupils receive education about:

- respectful online behaviour;
- responsible use of social media;
- digital citizenship;
- artificial intelligence and emerging technologies;
- cyberbullying; and
- how to seek help.

The College may involve parents, internet providers, the Police or other agencies where appropriate.

12. Boarding

As a boarding school, Malvern College recognises that positive relationships within Houses are fundamental to pupils' wellbeing. The College promotes an inclusive boarding culture through:

- strong relationships between pupils and House staff;
- clear behavioural expectations, such as the start-of-term pupil briefing;
- regular opportunities to discuss wellbeing;
- effective supervision;
- comprehensive induction for new boarders;
- Living Together – junior pupil sessions to reflect on boarding house life;
- trained Peer Mentors
- Lower Sixth leadership and safeguarding training;
- easy access to support throughout the day and evening; and
- a culture in which pupils are encouraged to speak up whenever concerns arise.

This approach supports the expectations of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools, particularly those relating to safeguarding, boarders' welfare and positive relationships.

13. Record Keeping, Monitoring and Review

All bullying concerns are recorded appropriately using the College's safeguarding and behaviour recording systems. The College monitors incidents to identify patterns, emerging risks and areas where additional support or preventative work may be required. Information gathered through monitoring helps inform:

- pastoral provision;
- staff training;
- pupil education;
- boarding practice;
- supervision arrangements; and
- future safeguarding priorities.

The Deputy Head and Designated Safeguarding Lead regularly review bullying trends and report anonymised information to the Head and Governing Body as appropriate.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner in response to changes in legislation, statutory guidance or College practice.

14. Information for Pupils and Parents

Everyone has the right to feel safe, respected and included. The College encourages all members of the community to contribute to its Speak Up culture by reporting concerns promptly and supporting one another.

Pupils should never feel that they have to deal with bullying alone. Concerns can be shared with House staff, Tutors, the Safeguarding Team, Counsellors, Independent Listeners, Peer Mentors, Prefects or through Whisper.

Parents are encouraged to contact the College promptly if they have concerns about their child or another pupil. The College will work closely with families while respecting appropriate confidentiality. Further information is available in the College's Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy, Child-on-Child Abuse Policy and Online Safety Policy.