



# Ark John Keats Academy

## Secondary Anti- Bullying and Harassment Policy 2022-23

All staff should have access to this procedure and sign to the effect that they have read and understood its contents

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School:	Ark John Keats Academy	Key Contact Name:	Aaron Collingwoode-Williams
Key Contact Email:	<a href="mailto:info@arkjohnkeatsacademy.org">info@arkjohnkeatsacademy.org</a>	Key Contact Phone:	020 8443 3113

### POSITIONING WITHIN ARK OPERATIONAL MODEL

Component	Element
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Leadership & Planning <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring, Reporting & Data <input type="checkbox"/> Governance & Accountabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching & Learning <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum & Assessment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Culture, Ethos & Wellbeing <input type="checkbox"/> Pathways & Enrichment <input type="checkbox"/> Parents & Community <input type="checkbox"/> Finance, IT & Estates <input type="checkbox"/> Our People	Safeguarding

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## **1. Statement of Intent**

1.1. At Ark John Keats Academy we have a policy of prevention. Preventing bullying makes it easier to respond to incidents when they occur. It also enables us to create an ethos in which the whole academy community is clear that bullying is completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated. This policy should be used in conjunction with the Academy's Behaviour Policy.

### **1.2. Why do we need an Anti-Bullying Procedure?**

1.2.1. Persistent bullying can severely inhibit a child's ability to learn effectively. The negative effects of bullying can have an impact on a person for their entire life. This school wishes to promote a secure and happy environment free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behaviour. Therefore, this procedure promotes practices within the school to reinforce our vision, and to remove or discourage practices that negate them.

## **2. Review of this Procedure**

2.1. This procedure will be reviewed bi-annually. It may also be reviewed and amended, in consultation with all stakeholders, in the light of events or experience. The Stakeholders of this procedure are children, parents and carers, teaching, non-teaching, support, supply, peripatetic, contract staff and third-party contractors (whose employees or sub-contractors have access to school premises), governors, volunteers and trustees working in or on behalf of the school, including those from the Ark central team.

2.2. Data from the monitoring and recording of incidents (including 'nil' returns) will also inform procedure review and will be seen by the governing body at governing body meetings.

## **3. Aims of this Procedure**

3.1. The aim of the Anti-Bullying Procedure is to ensure that pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will pupils be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available at the Academy.

3.2. To assist in creating an ethos in which attending Ark John Keats Academy is a positive experience for all members of our community

3.3. To make it clear that all forms of bullying are unacceptable at Ark John Keats Academy. To enable everyone to feel safe while at Ark John Keats Academy and encourage pupils to report incidents of bullying.

3.4. To deal with each incident of bullying effectively, taking into consideration the needs of all parties and of our community, and, as a result, to reduce the incidents of bullying.

3.5. To support and protect victims of bullying and ensure they are listened to.

3.6. To help and support children displaying bullying behaviour to change their attitudes and understand why it needs to change.

3.7. To liaise with parents/carers and other appropriate members of the Academy community.

3.8. To ensure all members of our community feel responsible for helping to reduce bullying.

## 4. Objectives of the Procedure

- 4.1. Evidence that our whole community has ownership of the Academy's Anti-Bullying Procedure.
- 4.2. To maintain and develop effective listening systems for children and staff within Ark John Keats Academy.
- 4.3. To involve all staff in dealing with incidents of bullying effectively and promptly.
- 4.4. To equip all staff with the skills and information necessary to deal with incidents of bullying.
- 4.5. To involve the wider academy community (e.g. midday supervisors, part-time staff/volunteers) in dealing effectively with and, if necessary, referring bullying incidents.
- 4.6. To communicate with parents/carers and the wider academy community effectively on the subject of bullying.
- 4.7. To acknowledge the key role of every staff member in dealing with incidents of bullying.
- 4.8. To ensure that all incidents of bullying which overlap with safeguarding concerns are recorded on Impero EdAware and always on Bromcom.
- 4.9. To raise incidents of bullying violations from the safeguarding solution SENSO.
- 4.10. To ensure information is gathered appropriately, and shared with relevant organisations as necessary.
- 4.11. To promote emotional health and wellbeing across the whole Academy/setting and for all members of our community to role-model this in all situations.

## 5. Definition of Bullying

- 5.1. Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. Bullying can be:
  - a) **Emotional:** being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures).
  - b) **Physical:** pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence.
  - c) **Racist:** racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
  - d) **Sexual:** unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
  - e) **Homophobic:** because of or focussing on the issue of sexuality.
  - f) **Verbal:** name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.
  - g) **Cyber:** all areas of internet, such as email and internet chat room misuse, mobile threats by text messaging and calls, misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera & video facilities.
- 5.2. It is important to understand that bullying is not the odd occasion of falling out with friends, name calling, arguments or when the occasional 'joke' is played on someone. Children do sometimes fall out or say things because they are upset. When occasional problems of this kind arise, it is not classed as bullying. It is an important part of a child's development to learn how to deal with friendship breakdowns, the odd name calling or childish prank. We all have to learn how to deal with these situations and develop social skills to repair relationships.
- 5.3. Bullying is a form of abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as "banter" or "part of growing up". Different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with peer-on-peer abuse. This could, for example, include girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to initiation-type violence.
- 5.4. Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from the Academy. These behaviours, however, do not mean that bullying is taking place. Likewise, bullying may occur without these behaviours appearing. Pupils must be encouraged to report bullying at the Academy. The Academy staff must be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with the Academy policy.

## 5.5. Some warning signs that a pupil is being bullied

- Changes in academic performance
- Appears anxious
- Regularly feeling sick or unwell
- Wanting to visit the nurse regularly
- Reluctance to come to school
- Clothes/bags torn or damaged
- Money/possessions going missing
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Unexplained behaviour changes, e.g. bad-tempered, tearful, unhappiness
- Loss of appetite
- Not sleeping
- Loss of weight
- Seen alone a lot
- Not very talkative

## 6. Practice and Procedures

### 6.1. Statutory duty of academies

6.1.1. The Principal has a legal duty under KCSIE 2021 to draw up procedures to prevent bullying among pupils and to bring these procedures to the attention of staff, parents/carers and pupils. Ark John Keats Academy will develop protocols for the reporting and dealing with the prevention of bullying.

### 6.2. What we do to prevent bullying?

- a) Everyone involved in the life of Ark John Keats Academy must take responsibility for promoting a common antibullying approach. We aim to:
- b) Be supportive of each other
- c) Provide positive role models
- d) Convey a clear understanding that we disapprove of unacceptable behaviour
- e) Be clear that we all follow the rules and shared values of Ark John Keats Academy
- f) Be fully involved in the development of the Anti-Bullying Procedure and support anti-bullying practice
- g) Support each other in the implementation of this procedure

6.3. Train all staff, including teaching staff, support staff (e.g. administration staff, lunchtime support staff and site support staff) and pastoral staff, to identify all forms of bullying and take appropriate action, following the school's policy and procedures, including recording and reporting incidents. All members of the academy community are expected to report incidents of bullying.

6.4. All staff have a vital role to play as they are at the forefront of behaviour management and supporting children's sense of wellbeing. They have the closest knowledge of the children in their care, and should build up a relationship involving mutual support, trust and respect.

6.5. All Ark John Keats Academy Staff will:

- a) Provide children with a framework of behaviour, including rules which support the whole academy policy.
- b) Emphasise and behave in a respectful and caring manner to children and colleagues, to set a good tone and help create a positive atmosphere.
- c) Raise awareness of bullying through activities, stories, role-play, discussion, peer support, academy council, PSHE etc.
- d) Through the Principal/DSL, keep the governing body informed.
- e) Record bullying incidents on Bromcom and any safeguarding implications/concerns onto Impero EdAware.

## 6.6. Implementation

6.6.1. Ark John Keats Academy procedures when dealing with incidents:

- a) If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with in the first instance by the member of staff who has been approached.
- b) The key member of staff, for example the HOY will interview all concerned and will record the incident.
- c) The class teacher/Head of Year will be kept informed and if it persists he/she will advise the appropriate staff members.
- d) Parents/carers will be kept informed.
- e) Sanctions will be used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties concerned.
- f) Data protection does not prohibit communication and information sharing, especially where there is a safeguarding concern

## 6.7. Pupils

6.7.1. Who are 'Bystanders' and 'Upstanders'?

6.7.1.1. **Bystanders** - someone who witnesses bullying, either in person or online, is a bystander. Friends, pupils, peers, teachers, school staff, parents, coaches, and other youth-serving adults can be bystanders.

6.7.1.2. People who are bullied often feel even more alone because there are witnesses who do nothing. When no one intervenes, the person being targeted may feel that bystanders do not care or they agree with what is happening. There are many reasons why a bystander may not interject, even if they believe that bullying is wrong. They may be afraid of retaliation or of becoming the target of bullying themselves. They might fear that getting involved could have negative social consequences.

6.7.2. **Upstanders** - An upstander is someone who sees what happens and intervenes, interrupts, or speaks up to stop the bullying.

6.7.3. There are many things that bystanders to bullying can do to become upstanders:

- Question the bullying behaviour e.g. changing the subject or questioning the behaviour can shift the focus.
- Inform an adult – teachers, school staff, family members.
- Reach out privately to check in with the person who was bullied to let them know you do not agree with it and that you care. It makes a difference

## 6.8. Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by staff:

- a) Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of staff of their choice/trusted adult
- b) Reassuring the pupil
- c) Offering continuous support
- d) Restoring self-esteem and confidence.

## 6.9. Pupils who have bullied will be helped by staff:

- a) Discussing what happened
- b) Discovering why the pupil guilty of bullying became involved
- c) Establishing the wrong-doing and need to change, as well as suggesting strategies to assist change
- d) Informing parents/carers to help change the attitude of the pupil

## 6.10. The following disciplinary steps can be taken:

- a) Explanation why the inappropriate behaviour is unacceptable
- b) Reparation of damaged relationships
- c) Time away from an activity
- d) Meeting with staff, parent and child
- e) Missing another activity
- f) Time out from the classroom

- g) Pastoral support plan
- h) Official warnings to cease offending
- i) Detention
- j) Exclusion from certain areas of the academy premises
- k) Minor fixed-term exclusion
- l) Major fixed-term exclusion
- m) Permanent exclusion

6.10.1. Within the curriculum the Academy will raise the awareness of the nature of bullying through inclusion in PSHE, registration time, assemblies and subject areas, as appropriate, in an attempt to eradicate such behaviour.

## 6.11. **Support**

6.11.1. At Ark John Keats Academy we will continue to support this procedure in the following ways:

- a) We continue to address staff training needs, by organising regular training to tackle all forms of bullying, through e-safety/online and behaviour management training, and develop increase awareness on identifying homophobic, bi-phobic, and trans-phobic incidents.
- b) Ensure anti-bullying has a high profile throughout the year, reinforced through key opportunities such as anti-bullying week.
- c) Provide systematic opportunities to develop pupils' social and emotional skills, including building their resilience and self-esteem.
- d) Consider a range of opportunities and approaches for addressing bullying throughout the curriculum and other activities, such as through displays, assemblies, peer support, the school/student council, etc.
- e) Pupils made aware of bullying through specific forms of abuse such as radicalisation, cyberbullying, peer on peer relationship/abuse, social media, criminal exploitation, county lines, CSE, inappropriate content and use of social media.
- f) By including teaching about other forms of discrimination, prejudice and stereotyping in an age-appropriate way and in accordance with guidance so that pupils understand and appreciate diversity.

## 6.12. **Anti-bullying advice to Parents / Carers**

- A great deal of bullying is CYBER-BULLYING. Please regularly monitor your child's use of texting, Facebook, Twitter and other social media sites. Access to these is out of the schools control when your child is not in school.
- TALK to your child on a regular basis, so any problem is easier to share.
- LISTEN to what they say.
- ENCOURAGE your child to feel good about themselves, realising that we are all different and equally important.
- If you believe your child is being bullied, or is a bully, talk to other adults at home or at school and explore the options. DON'T STAY SILENT.
- If your child is a victim assure them that it is not their fault and that you are going to do something to help.
- Be realistic in your expectations, sometimes on-going problems can take time to resolve
- TRY to be co-operative with our school and not be aggressive. Without a good working relationship between parents and the school the situation could deteriorate, which won't help you or them.
- ALWAYS remember that children can't solve bullying on their own. They NEED the support of parents/carers and our school.

See Appendix B for Ark John Keats Academy's guide for parents on social media risks.

## 7. Cyberbullying

7.1. When responding to cyberbullying concerns, Ark John Keats Academy will:

- 7.1.1. Act as soon as an incident has been reported or identified.
- 7.1.2. Provide appropriate support for the person who has been cyberbullied and work with the person who has carried out the bullying to ensure that it does not happen again.
- 7.1.3. Encourage the person being bullied to keep any evidence (screenshots) of the bullying activity to assist any investigation.
- 7.1.4. Take all available steps where possible to identify the person responsible. This may include:
  - looking at use of the school systems
  - identifying and interviewing possible witnesses
  - Contacting the service provider and the police, if necessary
  - Work with the individuals and online service providers to prevent the incident from spreading and assist in removing offensive or upsetting material from circulation
  - Support reports to a service provider to remove content if those involved are unable to be identified or if those involved refuse to or are unable to delete content
  - Confiscating and searching pupils' electronic devices, such as mobile phones, in accordance with the law and the school searching and confiscation policy. (Note: Schools should ensure they access the DfE 'Searching, screening and confiscation at school' and Childnet cyberbullying guidance to ensure that the schools powers are used proportionately and lawfully)
  - Requesting the deletion of locally-held content and content posted online if they contravene school behavioural policies
  - Ensure that sanctions are applied to the person responsible for the cyberbullying; the school will take steps to change the attitude and behaviour of the bully, as well as ensuring access to any additional help that they may need
  - Inform the police if a criminal offence has been committed

7.2. Provide information to staff and pupils regarding steps they can take to protect themselves online. This may include:

- advising those targeted not to retaliate or reply;
- providing advice on blocking or removing people from contact lists;
- helping those involved to think carefully about what private information they may have in the public domain.

## 8. Equality Impact Statement

8.1. We will do all we can to ensure that this procedure does not discriminate, directly or indirectly. We shall do this through regular monitoring and evaluation of our policies. On review we shall assess and consult relevant stakeholders on the likely impact of our policies on the promotion of all aspects of equality, as laid down in the Equality Act (2010).

8.2. This will include, but not necessarily be limited to: race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, religion, cultural beliefs and pregnancy/maternity. We will use an appropriate Equality Impact Assessment to monitor the impact of all our policies and this procedure may be amended as a result of this assessment.

## 9. Useful links and supporting organisations

- Anti-Bullying Alliance: [www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)
- Childline: [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)
- Family Lives: [www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)
- Kidscape: [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)
- MindEd: [www.minded.org.uk](http://www.minded.org.uk)



- NSPCC: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)
- The BIG Award: [www.bullyinginterventiongroup.co.uk/index.php](http://www.bullyinginterventiongroup.co.uk/index.php)
- PSHE Association: [www.pshe-association.org.uk](http://www.pshe-association.org.uk)
- Restorative Justice Council: [www.restorativejustice.org.uk](http://www.restorativejustice.org.uk)
- The Diana Award: [www.diana-award.org.uk](http://www.diana-award.org.uk)
- Victim Support: [www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)
- Young Minds: [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)
- Young Carers: [www.youngcarers.net](http://www.youngcarers.net)
- The Restorative Justice Council: [www.restorativejustice.org.uk/restorative-practiceschools](http://www.restorativejustice.org.uk/restorative-practiceschools)

## **Cyberbullying**

- Childnet: [www.childnet.com](http://www.childnet.com)
- Internet Watch Foundation: [www.iwf.org.uk](http://www.iwf.org.uk)
- Think U Know: [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)
- UK Safer Internet Centre: [www.saferinternet.org.uk](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk)
- The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS)  
[www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-council-for-child-internet-safety-ukccis](http://www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-council-for-child-internet-safety-ukccis)
- DfE 'Cyberbullying: advice for headteachers and school staff':  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying)
- DfE 'Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying':  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying)
- Race, religion and nationality
- Anne Frank Trust: [www.annefrank.org.uk](http://www.annefrank.org.uk)
- Kick it Out: [www.kickitout.org](http://www.kickitout.org)
- Report it: [www.report-it.org.uk](http://www.report-it.org.uk)
- Stop Hate: [www.stophateuk.org](http://www.stophateuk.org)
- Tell Mama: [www.tellmama.org.uk](http://www.tellmama.org.uk)
- Educate against Hate: [www.educateagainsthate.com](http://www.educateagainsthate.com)
- Show Racism the Red Card: [www.srtrc.org/educational](http://www.srtrc.org/educational)

## **LGBT**

- Barnardo's LGBT Hub: [www.barnardos.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/our\\_work/lgbtq.htm](http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/our_work/lgbtq.htm)
- Metro Charity: [www.metrocentreonline.org](http://www.metrocentreonline.org) • EACH: [www.eachaction.org.uk](http://www.eachaction.org.uk)
- Proud Trust: [www.theproudtrust.org](http://www.theproudtrust.org)
- Schools Out: [www.schools-out.org.uk](http://www.schools-out.org.uk)
- Stonewall: [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)

## **Sexual harassment and sexual bullying**

- Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAW)  
[www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk](http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk)
- A Guide for Schools:  
[www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/data/files/resources/71/EVAWCoalition-Schools-Guide.pdf](http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/data/files/resources/71/EVAWCoalition-Schools-Guide.pdf)
- Disrespect No Body: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/disrespect-nobodycampaign-posters](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disrespect-nobodycampaign-posters)
- Anti-bullying Alliance: Preventing and responding to Sexual Bullying:  
[www.antibullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-about-bullying/sexual-and-genderrelated/preventing-and-responding-sexual](http://www.antibullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-about-bullying/sexual-and-genderrelated/preventing-and-responding-sexual)
- Anti-bullying Alliance: advice for school staff and professionals about developing effective anti-bullying practice in relation to sexual bullying:  
[www.antibullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-about-bullying/sexual-and-gender-related](http://www.antibullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-about-bullying/sexual-and-gender-related)

## Appendix A: Ark John Keats Academy Bullying Response Process

Incidents of bullying and harassment are often notoriously difficult to prove, and for this reason many schools struggle with a culture of low-level bullying that goes unchallenged because it is unproven. At Ark John Keats Academy, we take a 5 stage approach to bullying incidents in order to stamp out this culture of low-level bullying and ensure that all persistent incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively to ensure our school remains a safe and inclusive place for all students.

**Stage 1:** An incident of suspected bullying or harassment is reported to the year team. The year team will record this on EdAware and collect statements from the accuser and accused along with any additional evidence (e.g. screenshots). This can lead to a few outcomes:

- If the incident is difficult to prove (e.g. conflicting statements, no other evidence) or appears to be a one-off, a restorative will be held between the students. A verbal warning will be issued about further incidents of unkindness. The action will be recorded on EdAware and the year team will continue to monitor.
- If the incident is proven (e.g. student admits it, screenshots of cyberbullying, etc.), jump to stage 3.

**Stage 2:** If concerns about bullying or harassment are evident (confirmed unkindness), the year team will investigate by gathering additional statements/evidence and record on EdAware:

- If the incident remains difficult to prove, another restorative will be held by the year team where an Anti-Bullying Contract is signed (students agree that the matter is resolved and no further unkind or bullying behaviour will occur). The Head of Year will inform parents of suspected bullying/unkindness and complete an incident log with parents/carers. Action to be recorded on EdAware.

**Stage 3:** If the bullying involves proven cyberbullying or discrimination (homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, racism, etc.), if the student admits to bullying, or if the student fails to stop the behaviour after Stage 2, the student will be placed in Internal Exclusion to separate them from the victim while the incident is investigated. The following actions will also occur:

- As well as being recorded on EdAware, the bullying concern will be referred to the safeguarding team to record in the formal Bullying Log.
- A meeting will be arranged with the parents attended by the HoY and SLT link. A student plan is agreed with interventions to support the student to refrain from further bullying. A record of the meeting is shared with the parent and kept on the student file.
- A meeting is arranged with the victim to confirm the level support and ongoing monitoring to ensure that there is no repeated incidents
- Additional sanctions may be issued depending on the severity of the incident.

**Stage 4:** If the bullying or harassing behaviour continues after a stage 3 meeting has been held, the student will be placed back into Internal Exclusion to separate them from the victim while the incident is investigated. The following actions will also occur:

- As well as being recorded on EdAware, the bullying concern will be referred to the safeguarding team to record in the formal Bullying Log.
- A written warning will be issued by the Safeguarding lead and Vice Principal.
- A meeting will be arranged with the parents attended by the Vice Principal. A student plan is agreed with interventions to support the student to refrain from further bullying. A record of the meeting is shared with the parent and kept on the student file.
- A fixed term exclusion is likely to be issued, depending on the severity of the incident

**Stage 5:** If the bullying or harassing behaviour continues after a written warning, the student will be referred for a Principal's Warning or Behaviour Panel. Additional actions such as an alternative provision placement or managed move will also be considered. Although this approach provides structure to our anti-bullying policy, at times it may be appropriate to move between stages or adjust sanctions depending on the specific incident.

## **Appendix B: Helping your child stay safe online**

### **Safeguarding your children in school**

At Ark John Keats Academy, we care a lot about the safety of your children. In school we have taken significant measures to ensure that children are safe in school and in the local community. We have members of staff on duty before and after school, encouraging your children to cross the road safely and make their way directly to and from school to ensure that their safety is not at risk on their transitions to and from school. As well as preserving the physical safety of your children, it is an important priority for our school to safeguard their emotional and mental health and wellbeing both in and out of school. In school, we have a comprehensive non-examined curriculum, delivered to your children each day, which teaches them to understand how to keep themselves safe, how to manage their wellbeing and the wellbeing of their peers, and how to understand the world around them. We are also lucky enough to have inclusion links on each year group corridor who can support your child if they are struggling with their emotional mental health and wellbeing, and two onsite counselling services that provide additional therapeutic support for those children that need it.

### **Safeguarding your children online**

However, one area that it is more difficult for schools to manage safeguarding effectively, is keeping children safe online. Although we do take a lot of time to educate students about appropriate use of technology and how to stay safe online, and ban the use of mobile phones on the school site to prevent students from engaging in unsafe content and online bullying while they are in school, the majority of students' internet and technology usage occurs outside the school gates, while they are at home and in the local community. For this reason we must encourage parents and carers to take a leading role in ensuring that you know exactly what your children are doing while on the internet and using popular social media apps, so that you can keep your children safe while they are at home. Although we will sanction the inappropriate use of technology in school when incidents of inappropriate technology use and cyberbullying come to light, it is essential that parents and carers take a close interest in their children's use of technology to prevent these incidents from occurring in the first place.

### **Understanding children's use of social media**

With an ever-changing array of social media apps, it can be confusing and overwhelming as a parent to understand what your child is doing online. The main apps that have been involved in the most recent incidents of inappropriate internet usage include:

**Snapchat:** On Snapchat, children can post public 'stories' including videos, images and text, share 'stories' with a select group of friends, and have private or group messages.

- Snapchat is a particularly concerning platform when it comes to inappropriate technology usage as 'stories' and messages disappear after they are viewed, leaving no evidence behind.
- Children can also share their location either publicly or with their friends using 'SnapMaps.' This places children at risk as it lets strangers know where they are.
- We do not recommend that KS3 children are allowed to use Snapchat. The minimum age for this app is 13.
- If you do choose to allow your child to use this app, we recommend regular spot-checks of their stories and messages.
- If your child reports being bullied on Snapchat, it is essential that they screenshot evidence of this as soon as possible before it disappears from the platform.

**Whatsapp:** Children use Whatsapp to text other children, either one to one or in groups. Children can also send voice notes and have video calls with other children on Whatsapp.

- Whatsapp has featured in several of the cyberbullying incidents we have managed recently, where groups of children have posted images of and unkind comments about other children, who may or may not be part of the group chat.
- We do not recommend that KS3 children are allowed to use Whatsapp. The minimum age for this app is 13.

- If you do choose to allow your child to use this app, we recommend that you regularly check your child's phone to see the content of the discussions in their Whatsapp messages. Again, screenshot any evidence of bullying as soon as you can before the perpetrator chooses to delete it.

**Instagram:** Instagram is an image-sharing platform, but it also allows children to message each other, either in group chats or one to one.

- Children sometimes create fake profiles on Instagram and use these to post unkind content about other children in their class or year group. Children sometimes also create fake profiles on Instagram pretending to be someone else.
- Children can also post unkind comments underneath other children's pictures.
- The direct message feature on Instagram can also be used similarly to Whatsapp.
- We do not recommend that KS3 children are allowed to use Instagram. The minimum age for this app is 13.
- If you do choose to allow your child to use this app, we recommend that you check the content that your child is posting on Instagram very regularly to ensure that they are not posting inappropriate content on the app.

**TikTok:** Tiktok is an app that allows children to watch, create and share videos created by themselves or other content creators.

- If children's privacy settings are not secure, then people they don't know can contact them, send images or videos, and use this feature to bully by issuing insults or threats.
- The direct message feature on Tiktok can also be used similarly to Whatsapp.
- We do not recommend that KS3 children are allowed to use TikTok. The minimum age for this app is 13.
- If you do choose to allow your child to use this app, we recommend that you check your child's followers, who they are following, privacy settings and their content frequently to ensure that they are not posting, listening to, or viewing inappropriate content on the app.

For additional advice on how to keep your child safe online, visit [www.internetmatters.org](http://www.internetmatters.org). If you are concerned that your child has been a victim of cyberbullying, please let us know by informing your child's tutor and Head of Year, who will pass on your concerns to the safeguarding team.

Alternatively, you can also speak to your child's tutor or Head of Year, who will pass on your concerns to the safeguarding team.