



Knox Academy

Anti-Bullying Guidance

(Aligned with Respect Me and “Respect for All” National Guidance and [Respect for All East Lothian Council Approach to Anti-Bullying Dec 2025](#))

Knox Academy Anti-Bullying Guidance

1. Vision and Purpose

At Knox Academy, we are committed to creating a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment in which all young people and staff feel valued, supported and free from bullying behaviour.

This guidance reflects Scotland's national anti-bullying approach, *Respect for All*, which promotes a **holistic, proactive and inclusive approach** to preventing and addressing bullying across all settings.

2. Understanding Bullying

Knox Academy adopts the national definition of bullying outlined in *Respect for All*:

"Bullying is face-to-face and/or online behaviour which impacts on a person's sense of physical and emotional safety, their capacity to feel in control of their life and their ability to respond effectively to the situation they are in."

"The behaviour does not need to be repeated, or intended to cause harm, for it to have an impact. Bullying behaviour can be physical, emotional or verbal and can cause people to feel hurt, threatened, frightened and left out."

Key Features of Bullying

Types of Bullying

Bullying can include, but is not limited to:

- Physical (e.g. pushing, hitting)
- Verbal (e.g. name-calling, insults)
- Social (e.g. exclusion, rumours)
- Online/cyberbullying (e.g. messages, images, social media)
- **Prejudice-based bullying**, including bullying related to:
 - Race, religion or culture
 - Disability or additional support needs
 - Gender identity or sexual orientation
 - Socio-economic background

Respect for All emphasises that **all forms of prejudice-based bullying must be addressed equally and explicitly** within school policy and practice.

What Bullying Is Not

It is important to distinguish bullying from:

- Conflict between equals
- Accidental harm
- Isolated incidents of poor behaviour (which still require response)

However, all behaviours that negatively affect relationships or wellbeing will be taken seriously and addressed appropriately.

3. Prevention and Response to Bullying

Knox Academy is committed to creating a safe, inclusive and respectful environment where all young people feel valued and protected. In line with *RespectMe* and East Lothian Council guidance, our approach to bullying is **preventative, relational and restorative**, recognising that bullying is behaviour which can be changed through education, support and effective intervention.

3.1 Inclusion and Equality

We actively challenge inequality and discrimination by:

- Addressing **prejudice-based bullying explicitly**
- Promoting understanding of diversity
- Ensuring all learners feel **included and represented**

3.2 Shared Responsibility

Creating a safe environment is the responsibility of:

- **All Staff** – modelling and reinforcing respectful behaviour
- **All Young people** – contributing to a positive school culture
- **All Parents/carers** – supporting and reinforcing expectations

A consistent, **whole-community** approach is essential to preventing and responding to bullying effectively.

3.3 Preventative Approaches

We will take proactive steps to prevent all forms of bullying by:

- **Promoting a positive school ethos**
Embedding respect, inclusion and kindness across all aspects of school life, including learning and teaching, assemblies and wider achievement.
- **Developing awareness and understanding**
Delivering age-appropriate learning experiences through Personal and Social Education (PSE) and the wider curriculum to help young people:

- Understand what bullying behaviour is (and is not), in line with the RespectMe definition
 - Recognise the impact of bullying on individuals and communities
 - Develop empathy, resilience and strategies to seek help
- **Amplifying pupil voice and leadership**
Providing meaningful opportunities for young people to shape our anti-bullying approaches through:
 - Pupil focus groups and consultation
 - Student leadership roles, including **S6 trained Pupil Support Ambassadors**
 - Ongoing feedback and evaluation of school practice
 - **Developing peer support systems**
Ensuring young people can access trusted peer support through:
 - **Trained S6 Pupil Support Ambassadors**, supported by staff Anti-Bullying Ambassadors
 - Safe, supervised opportunities for pupils to speak confidentially with trained peers
 - **Staff development and consistency**
Providing regular professional learning to ensure all staff:
 - Understand their responsibilities in recognising and responding to bullying
 - Apply consistent, relational and restorative approaches
 - Are confident in supporting young people effectively
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3.4 Accessible Pathways for Support

We will ensure all young people know how and where to access support:

- **Digital access to support**
Pupils can complete a **Google Form via the school website** to:
 - Request support
 - Identify a preferred member of staff they feel comfortable speaking with
 - Highlight concerns confidentially
 - **Pupil Support Structures**
All pupils have access to:
 - Their **Pupil Support Leader**
 - Their **House/Year Head (Depute Head Teacher)**
These staff will coordinate appropriate support and follow-up.
 - **Peer Support Access**
Pupils can self-refer or be encouraged to speak with:
 - **S6 Pupil Support Ambassadors**
 - Supported by trained staff Anti-Bullying Ambassadors
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3.5 Responding to Bullying Behaviour

In line with RespectMe, responses will be **proportionate, supportive and focused on resolution and repair**.

When bullying behaviour is identified:

- **Take all concerns seriously**
Every report of bullying will be listened to, recorded and acted upon promptly.
 - **Adopt a child-centred approach**
Responses will prioritise the wellbeing of those affected, ensuring that young people feel heard, safe and supported.
 - **Use restorative and relational approaches**
Where appropriate, staff will:
 - Support dialogue and understanding
 - Focus on repairing relationships
 - Help young people understand the impact of their behaviour
 - **Provide targeted support**
Support will be tailored to individual needs and may include:
 - Pastoral support from Pupil Support staff
 - Peer support through trained ambassadors
 - Involvement of parents/carers where appropriate
 - Multi-agency support for complex cases
 - **Address behaviour and underlying need**
Interventions will focus not only on the behaviour but also on any underlying factors contributing to it.
 - **Ensure appropriate follow-up**
Staff will:
 - Monitor the situation over time
 - Check in with all young people involved
 - Review the effectiveness of interventions
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3.6 Partnership with Parents/Carers

We will:

- Communicate openly and sensitively with parents/carers where concerns arise
- Provide guidance on how young people could be supported at home
- Work in partnership to achieve positive outcomes for all young people

4. Children's Rights and Anti-Bullying Statement

East Lothian Council is committed to **protecting and promoting the rights of all children and young people** and to creating and sustaining **safe, positive and inclusive learning environments** where respect is shown to, and given by, all.

Bullying behaviour is **inconsistent with these principles** and represents a **breach of children's rights**, as set out in the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**, which is now enacted in Scots law. The UNCRC underpins all anti-bullying work and affirms that children and young people have the right to:

- Be **protected from harm, abuse and violence**
- Learn in an environment that is **safe, inclusive and free from fear or discrimination**
- Be **respected, listened to and involved** in decisions affecting them

East Lothian Council recognises that **every child and young person has the right to grow up free from bullying behaviour**, including prejudice-based bullying, and to experience a learning environment which **welcomes diversity and nurtures respect for all**.

In this context, Knox Academy is committed to:

- Upholding a **rights-based approach** in preventing and responding to bullying behaviour
- Promoting **positive relationships and inclusive practice**, in line with *Respect for All*
- Ensuring that all children and young people feel **safe, valued and supported**
- Taking all concerns seriously, with a focus on **wellbeing, support and resolution**

We are clear that **bullying behaviour will not be tolerated**, as it undermines the rights, wellbeing and educational experience of children and young people, and is incompatible with the values of Ambition, Respect, and Community that underpin our school.

5. Equality Duties and Response to Prejudice-Based Bullying

The application of this policy actively upholds the school's statutory duties under the **Equality Act 2010** by ensuring that all learners are treated fairly, with dignity and respect, and are protected from discrimination, harassment and victimisation. In line with the **Public Sector Equality Duty**, the school is committed to:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advancing equality of opportunity for all learners
- Fostering good relations across the school community

Bullying behaviour relating to the **protected characteristics**—including age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation—is taken seriously and addressed promptly and robustly. Incidents are recorded, monitored and analysed to identify patterns and inform targeted interventions, ensuring a proactive and preventative approach.

The school also recognises that bullying can be linked to **prejudice and discrimination beyond the protected characteristics**, including socio-economic disadvantage, care experience, family circumstances, body image and appearance. This policy ensures that such behaviours are challenged with equal rigour, reflecting our commitment to inclusion and equity for all learners.

Through curriculum learning, pastoral support, and whole-school approaches, we promote understanding, respect and positive relationships. Staff are supported through professional learning to recognise and respond effectively to all forms of bullying, with particular attention to those rooted in prejudice.

The consistent application of this policy ensures that all young people feel safe, valued and included, and that the school community actively promotes equality, diversity and respect in line with national guidance and local authority expectations.

6. Expectations and Responsibilities

At Knox Academy, all members of our community are expected to actively contribute to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of respectful relationships, in line with *RespectMe* guidance and East Lothian Council policy.

6.1 All Staff and Volunteers

All staff and volunteers play a vital role in modelling positive relationships and supporting young people.

They are expected to:

- Be **approachable, visible and open**, ensuring that all young people feel confident in seeking support from any adult in the school.
 - Be **equipped and confident** to respond to concerns, including recognising signs of distress, listening carefully and taking all disclosures seriously.
 - **Promote a culture of respect, inclusion and kindness** through everyday interactions and through the curriculum.
 - **Challenge inappropriate behaviour and language** consistently and respectfully.
 - Follow the school's procedures for **recording, responding to and monitoring incidents**, ensuring timely and proportionate responses.
 - Work collaboratively with **Pupil Support Teams**, colleagues and partners to assess need and plan appropriate support.
 - Contribute to whole-school improvement through engagement with **Staff Anti-bullying Ambassadors**, supporting awareness-raising and reflective practice.
 - Engage in ongoing **professional learning** to ensure practice is aligned with *RespectMe* guidance and current legislation.
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6.2 Children and Young People

At Knox Academy, young people are encouraged and supported to take an active role in shaping a positive school environment.

They are expected to:

- Treat others with **respect, fairness and empathy**, both in person and online.
 - Understand that bullying behaviour is unacceptable and take responsibility for their actions.
 - Feel confident to **report concerns**, whether for themselves or others, knowing they will be listened to and supported.
 - Support one another by **challenging unkind behaviour safely** and promoting inclusion.
 - Engage with school initiatives led by **Pupil Support Ambassadors**, helping to raise awareness, lead peer support and contribute to anti-bullying work.
 - Work with staff to develop their understanding of respectful relationships and digital citizenship.
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6.3 Pupil Support Teams

Pupil Support Teams play a central role in ensuring timely, coordinated and compassionate responses.

They are expected to:

- Provide **targeted support and guidance** for young people experiencing or displaying bullying behaviour.
 - Lead on **assessment, planning and review** of support, working closely with appropriate staff, families and partners.
 - Ensure that the voice of the young person is central to all decisions.
 - Maintain clear and accurate **records of concerns, actions and outcomes**.
 - Work collaboratively with **Staff Anti-bullying Ambassadors and Pupil Support Ambassadors** to strengthen preventative approaches.
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6.4 Pupil Support Ambassadors

Pupil Support Ambassadors are key to promoting a culture of respect and inclusion.

They are expected to:

- Act as **positive role models**, demonstrating respectful behaviour and promoting inclusion.
- Support peers by **listening, signposting and encouraging others to seek help**.
- Contribute to **awareness campaigns, pupil voice activities and school improvement work** linked to anti-bullying.

- Work alongside staff to ensure young people’s perspectives inform policy and practice.
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6.5 Staff Anti-bullying Ambassadors

Staff Anti-bullying Ambassadors support the consistent implementation of this policy.

They are expected to:

- Support Pupil Support Ambassadors with **guidance and reflection**
 - Lead or contribute to **training, awareness raising and policy development**.
 - Work collaboratively with Pupil Support Teams and Pupil Support Ambassadors to ensure a **whole-school, relational approach**.
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6.6 Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are important partners in promoting positive relationships.

They are expected to:

- Encourage their child to develop **respectful, inclusive behaviours**.
- Work in partnership with the school by **sharing concerns promptly** and engaging in supportive dialogue.
- Support the school’s efforts to address concerns in a **constructive and solution-focused manner**.
- Reinforce messages about **responsible online behaviour** and respectful communication.

Section 7: Language and Labelling

7.1 Guiding Principles

At Knox Academy, we recognise that the language used by staff, pupils and the wider school community shapes understanding, relationships and outcomes. As such, we actively avoid the use of fixed or labelling terms that may define individuals by behaviour or experience.

7.2 Avoidance of Labelling

In keeping with national and local guidance, Knox Academy does **not** use terms such as:

- *“bully”*
- *“victim”*
- *“perpetrator”*

These terms can:

- Imply fixed identities rather than recognising behaviour as changeable
- Place young people into roles that may reinforce negative patterns
- Oversimplify complex situations and relationships
- Limit opportunities for reflection, growth and restorative approaches

7.3 Language in Practice

Instead, we use language that:

- **Describes behaviours**, not individuals (e.g. “bullying behaviour” rather than “a bully”)
- **Recognises impact and experience** (e.g. “the young person experiencing bullying behaviour”)
- **Supports responsibility and change** (e.g. “the young person displaying bullying behaviour”)
- **Maintains dignity and respect for all parties**

This approach ensures that:

- All young people are seen as capable of change
- Responses focus on **restoration, support and accountability**
- Conversations remain solution-focused and inclusive

7.4 Staff Responsibilities

All staff at Knox Academy will:

- Model appropriate, non-labelling language in all verbal and written communication
- Challenge the use of harmful or labelling language where it occurs
- Support pupils in understanding the impact of language on themselves and others
- Ensure that records, reports and communications with parents/carers reflect this approach

8. Recording and Monitoring of Bullying Incidents

Knox Academy is committed to the effective recording and monitoring of bullying incidents to support early intervention, ensure consistency of response, and inform ongoing school improvement. All recording and monitoring practices are undertaken in line with the **Data Protection Act 2018** and **UK GDPR**, ensuring that personal data is handled lawfully, fairly and securely.

8.1 Recording of Incidents

- All reported or observed incidents of bullying behaviour will be recorded promptly and accurately by the member of staff managing the concern within the Pupil Support Team (PSL and DHT).

- Incidents will be logged using the **SEEMIS (Scottish Education Establishment Management Information System)** wellbeing module (Bullying and Equalities recording), in line with **East Lothian Council procedures**.
- Records will:
 - Clearly describe the nature of the incident, including type of bullying behaviour (e.g. prejudice-based, online, relational).
 - Identify those involved (those experiencing bullying and those displaying bullying behaviour).
 - Capture context, location, and any relevant contributory factors.
 - Outline actions taken and supports put in place.
- Language used in recording will be:
 - Objective and factual
 - Free from judgement or assumption
 - Focused on behaviour rather than labelling individuals

8.2 Data Protection and Confidentiality

- All records are maintained in accordance with **Data Protection Act 2018 principles**, including:
 - Data minimisation (only necessary information recorded)
 - Accuracy and regular updating
 - Secure storage within SEEMIS systems
- Access to records is restricted to appropriate staff (e.g. Senior Leadership Team, Pupil Support staff) on a **need-to-know basis**.

8.3 Monitoring and Quality Assurance

- Senior leaders, including Depute Head Teachers, will regularly monitor SEEMIS data to:
 - Identify patterns or trends (e.g. recurring behaviours, locations, times)
 - Analyse incidents across protected characteristics in line with **Equality Act 2010**
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and responses
- Monitoring will include:
 - Termly review of recorded incidents
 - Identification of groups or individuals requiring targeted support

8.4 Use of Data to Inform Improvement

- Recorded data will be used to:
 - Inform whole-school planning and improvement priorities
 - Develop targeted prevention strategies (e.g. assemblies, PSE inputs)
 - Support staff professional learning and consistency of practice

9. Creation of this Guidance

This guidance was created in June 2026 following significant engagement with staff, learners and parents/carers. This engagement in all cases offered a questionnaire, with opportunity for follow up focus groups. Questionnaire results can be viewed in Appendix 1.

This guidance was created with the guidance of East Lothian Council Anti-Bullying Policy and Respect Me.

[Respect for All East Lothian Council Approach to Anti-Bullying Dec 2025](#)

[Respect Me Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service](#)

This guidance was launched with staff, learners and their parents/carers in August 2026 and reviewed in June 2029.

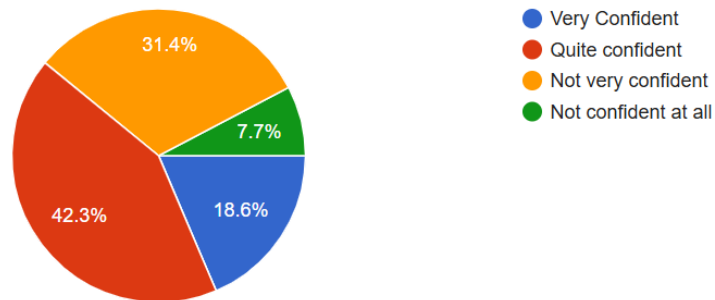
Appendix 1 – Highlights of Consultation with Learners, Staff and Parents/Carers

There was not always a clear understanding of the definition of Bullying from Parents/carers

3. How confident are you in your understanding of the school's definition of bullying?

[Copy chart](#)

156 responses

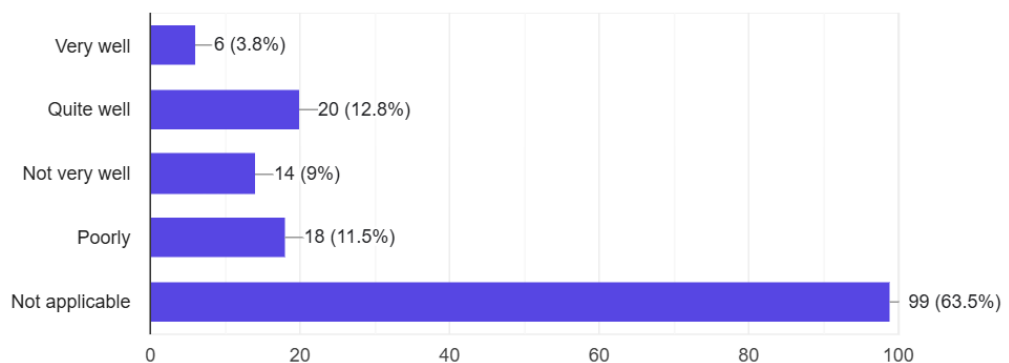


For those Parents/Carers who were aware their young person had experienced bullying, not enough Parents/Carers felt this had been dealt with appropriately.

6. If yes, how well do you feel the school responded to the situation? Very well

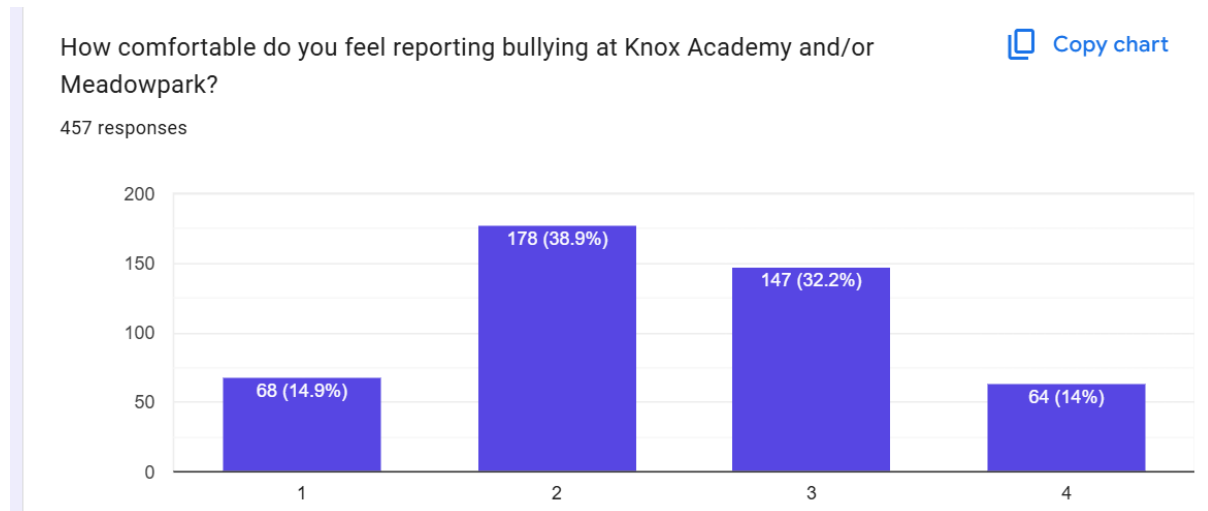
[Copy chart](#)

156 responses



Some Parents/Carers highlighted a lack of effective intervention and follow up and also poor communication and follow up. This led us to the creation of the Staff Anti-bullying Ambassador and Pupil Support Ambassadors to support the system, making communication and action quicker and easier for all concerned.

Learners did not always feel comfortable reporting bullying incidents and in focus groups suggested they wanted to be able to log and discuss incidents with any member of staff. See below where more than 50% of respondents did not feel confident reporting bullying. We hope the Pupil Support Ambassadors and the ability to log on and ask to speak to any staff member about a Bullying incident will be supportive.



Staff were keen to support their empowerment and be part of a culture for change. See the summary extract below from the questionnaire

“Empowering Staff and Encouraging Reporting: Empower staff to challenge any bullying behaviour, including low-level comments/name-calling, and provide staff training E.g. CAT session on finalised policy to increase confidence. Efforts should also focus on finding out about bullying by encouraging pupils to report early, potentially through anonymous reporting channels, to break the damaging cycle”.

Appendix 2 - Anti-Bullying Ambassadors: Structure, Roles and Responsibilities



1. Purpose of Anti-Bullying Ambassadors

- Promote a culture of kindness, inclusion and respect.
- Offer safe peer-to-peer support.
- Support early intervention and prevention.
- Provide staff with insight into pupil experience “on the ground”.
- Strengthen student voice and restorative practice.

2. Who Would the Ambassadors Be?

Pupil Ambassadors

Recommended profile

- Representatives from S5 and 6 (minimum of 4 from each house).
- Mix of personalities: confident leaders *and* quieter, empathetic pupils.
- Pupils with strong relational skills; not necessarily prefects or captains.
- Pupils who model the school values or are motivated to do so.
- Recruited through:
 - Self-nomination (linked to P7 transition support)
 - Staff nomination
 - Guidance/pastoral input (to ensure balanced group)

Benefits

- Strongest impact for whole-school culture change.
- Pupils feel heard and better supported.

Staff Ambassadors

Recommended profile

- Guidance staff or pupil support workers
- A classroom teacher from each faculty
- PSA/ASN staff who see pupil interactions closely
- A senior leader or PT as strategic lead (DHT Pupil Support)

Their role is NOT to replace pupil voice/ambassadors, but to:

- Mentor, coach, and safeguard pupil ambassadors.
- Support training, supervision and reporting.
- Facilitate communication between pupils and Pupil Support/SLT

3. How Many Ambassadors?

Pupil Ambassadors

Recommended total:

15–20 pupils (S5 and S6 Only)

Why this size works:

- Small enough to manage and train effectively.
- Large enough to create consistent visibility in corridors, social areas and events.

Staff Ambassadors

Recommended total

6–10 staff members

(including one senior leader (DHT Pupil Support – CF) who oversees the programme)

Why this size works:

- Offers coverage across the week and throughout the school.
- Does not overload staff but maintains strong presence.

4. How Would the System Work?

◆ Training

- Pupil/staff training from:
 - **Diana Award Anti-Bullying Ambassador Programme** (free online resources available)
 - School/Local authority and national anti-bullying guidelines (RespectMe training resources)
 - School-level training (e.g. restorative approaches, safeguarding, active bystander roles)

◆ Operational Model

- Training during June 2026 (start of S5/6 – Day off timetable)

A. Visibility & Presence

Pupil Ambassadors:

- Wear lanyards/badges.
- Staff a weekly drop-in space (lunchtime rota).
- Have named responsibility areas: corridors, social areas, playground

- Posters with Photos and names on display (pupils and staff) around the school with lunchtime and breaktime visibility zones

B. Reporting System

A simple, multi-access model:

- Ambassador weekly check-in sheets
- Direct approach to ambassadors or general staff
- A google form where pupils can report they need to speak to a member of staff and request support from a member of staff (all staff). No names mentioned on a Google form
- Staff ambassadors, Pupils Support Staff and DHTs will oversee this Google Form on a rota.

C. Communication

Recommended structure:

Weekly

- Ambassador check-in (15 minutes) to share patterns, worries or successes. Staff leads attend (on a rota).

Termly

- Full ambassador meeting to plan campaigns and reflect on actions.
- Report to SLT including:
 - Themes emerging
 - Hotspots
 - Interventions
 - Pupil voice feedback

Annual

- Review programme impact and training needs.

◆ Activities Pupil Ambassadors Deliver

- Anti-Bullying Week campaigns
- Assemblies or PSE inputs
- Peer-mentoring for new S1 pupils
- Kindness challenges / positive culture days
- “Safe spaces” during break/lunch for vulnerable pupils
- Supporting transitions

5. Who Should Lead the Ambassador Group?

Staff leadership responsibilities

- Safeguarding
- Oversight of training
- Monitoring reporting
- Liaising with parents
- Meeting with SLT

This hybrid model ensures:

- Pupils own the programme (crucial for impact).
- Staff ensure consistency, safety, and alignment with policy.

Appendix 3 – Reporting A Bullying Incident Flow Chart

