

Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy applies to all sections of Charlotte House School including EYFS.



Staff responsible:	Head
Last review/update date:	August 2024
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Approved by Board of Governors:	September 2024
Next review date:	August 2025
Related policies:	Behaviour & Sanctions Policy Child Safeguarding Policy Complaints Procedure Equal Opportunities Policy Internet & E-Safety Policy SEND Policy
This document also appears on:	Website

This policy was drawn up having regard to the DfE documents *Preventing and Tackling Bullying* (July 2017), *Cyberbullying: advice for headteachers & school staff* (November 2014) KCSIE (September 2024), and *Behaviour in schools: Advice for headteachers and school staff* (February 2024) and is to be read together with the Internet and e-Safety Policy.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

At Charlotte House School, our community is based upon respect, good manners and fair play. As a Rights Respecting School, we recognise how the UN Convention for the Rights of the Child supports our commitment to provide a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so that every one of our pupils can develop her full potential. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed, but orderly, atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other, inside and outside of School. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting Charlotte House School to maintain high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely. Acceptance of this policy forms part of our standard terms and conditions.

This policy is available to parents and prospective parents on our school website. It is also communicated to all staff and pupils.

Bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the school. Any kind of bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying) and child on child abuse is unacceptable. Any instances of bullying will be recorded and, where appropriate, will result in

disciplinary action in accordance with the school's behaviour policy. This policy also relates to the Early Years Foundation Stage.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

Put another way, bullying is the intentional hurting, harming, or humiliating of another person. It may take many forms, including physical (including any threat of or use of violence of any kind), sexual (including the sharing of nudes/semi-nudes), verbal (including cyberbullying via text messages, email, social media, gaming, or other instant messages, and can include the use of images and video), and/or emotional (including by excluding, being sarcastic, name-calling, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone, or actions that fall short of direct participation, where someone encourages others to bully, or joins in with laughing at a victim. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidating, and often involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator(s) and the victim(s) whether that be a physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), or intellectual imbalance, or by the perpetrator(s) having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate the victim(s).

Bullying can sometimes amount to child on child abuse, which is defined as abuse by one or more pupils against another pupil. It can be standalone or as part of wider abuse and can happen both inside and outside of school, and online. Further information about child on child abuse, including the procedures to follow when an incident of child on child abuse is reported can be found in Charlotte House's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Bullying is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, and may involve actions or comments regarding a person's race, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, special education needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain health conditions, or because of a child's familial circumstances, such as they are adopted, in care or that they have caring responsibilities. Bullying may be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. For example, bullying can still be homophobic if directed towards a child that is perceived to be gay, whether or not this is the case.

Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time and can involve anyone - pupils, other young people, staff, and parents.

Where an incident of bullying causes or is likely to cause significant harm to a pupil, the School will follow the procedures set out in Charlotte House's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

We treat any child on child abuse very seriously and are aware that it can cause severe psychological damage. It conflicts sharply with the school's policy on equal opportunities, as well as with its social and moral principles.

CYBERBULLYING

The way in which pupils relate to one another online can have a significant impact on the culture at school. Negative interactions online can damage the school's culture and can lead to school feeling like an unsafe place. At Charlotte House, we make it clear to pupils that the same standards of behaviour are expected online as apply offline, and that everyone should be treated with kindness, respect and dignity.

Cyberbullying can be defined as "the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others" (Belsey, <http://www.cyberbullying.org/>). It is an aggressive, intentional act often carried out repeatedly over time, and often against a victim who cannot easily defend themselves. We acknowledge that cyberbullying often takes place outside the school day and off the school premises.

Cyberbullying could involve communications by various electronic media, including for example:

- Texts, instant messages or calls on mobile phones;
- The use of mobile phone camera images to cause distress, fear, or humiliation;
- Posting threatening, abusive, sexual, discriminatory, offensive, or humiliating material or comments on websites (including blogs, personal websites, and social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly known as Twitter) or YouTube);
- Using e-mail to message others in a threatening or abusive manner; or
- Hijacking/ cloning e-mail accounts.

Charlotte House acknowledges that cyberbullying may take many different forms including: cyberstalking, exclusion or peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorised publication of private information or images, encouraging derogative comments on online platforms, sharing nudes/semi-nudes, upskirting, and sexting.

We have a role to play in teaching pupils about the underpinning knowledge and behaviours that can help them to navigate the online world safely and confidently regardless of the device, platform, or app. In taking this forward, the School has regard to the DfE's non-statutory guidance on *Teaching online safety in school* (January 2023).

Prevention of cyberbullying

For the prevention of cyberbullying, in addition to the measures described above, Charlotte house:

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its policy for the safe use of the internet/ E-Safety Policy. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our IT Department monitors pupils' use;
- May impose disciplinary sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse, of the internet in accordance with our Behaviour and Sanctions Policy;
- Issues all pupils with their own personal School email address. Access to all social media sites and personal email sites such as "hotmail" is not allowed from school computers/ tablets inside school;
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying in PSHE lessons, which covers blocking, removing contacts from "friend" or similar lists and sharing their personal data;
- Ensures its pupils are aware of the various forms in which cyberbullying can take place, that it can have severe and distressing consequences, and that participation in cyberbullying will not be tolerated;
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details private and secure;
- Does not allow the use of pupils' mobile phones or cameras anywhere in school. Any devices must be handed in to the school office on arrival in the morning and collected on leaving school.

Procedures for dealing with cyberbullying

We will follow the procedures set out in this policy and in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy where relevant for incidents of cyberbullying, taking such disciplinary action that is considered reasonable in the circumstances, with a view to regulating pupil conduct and protecting the reputation of the school, and the welfare of its pupils.

Although cyberbullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws that may apply to communications of a harassing or threatening manner or the unauthorised publication of private images, upskirting, sharing nudes/semi-nudes, and sexting. Where the school considers that a reported incident of cyberbullying may amount to a criminal offence, it will inform the Police.

The School's procedure for dealing with incidents involving the sharing of nudes or semi-nudes is set out in the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

If staff are notified or become aware of an incident of nudes or semi-nudes being shared by a pupil or of a pupil, they will refer the incident to the DSL as soon as possible. The DSL will follow the DDMSC / UKIS guidance *"Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people"* (February 2024) when responding to a report of sharing nudes and/or semi-nudes. In some circumstances the DSL may make an immediate referral to police and/or children's social care.

Electronic devices

In response to an allegation of cyberbullying (in any form), certain staff are permitted to conduct a search for electronic devices, such as a pupil's mobile phone, with the authority of the Head. Staff do not require the consent of the pupil, or their parents to undertake a search, provided they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil is in possession of a prohibited item, or an item that has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence, or to cause personal injury to any person (including the pupil being searched), or cause damage to property, and provided they have the Head's prior consent to undertake a search.

The search will be conducted in accordance with the procedure set out in the Staff handbook

Where a search finds an electronic device that is prohibited by the School Rules, or where the member of staff undertaking the search reasonably suspects that the electronic device has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence or cause personal injury or damage to property, the School may examine any data or files on the device, where there is good reason to do so, for example, where there has been an allegation of cyberbullying. Parental consent to search through electronic devices is not required but they will be informed after the event unless doing so presents a further risk to any child.

The School may also erase any data or files from the device if the School considers there to be good reason to do so, unless there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the device may contain evidence in relation to a criminal offence, where the files should not be deleted and the device must be given to the Police without delay.

If, following a search, the member of staff determines that the device does not contain any evidence in relation to a criminal offence, or are advised by the Police following a report to them that they will not take any further action to investigate an alleged offence, the School can decide whether it is appropriate to delete any files or data from the device, and may retain the device as

evidence of a breach of this policy and the School Rules. The School may then take necessary steps in accordance with the Behaviour and Sanctions Policy, where appropriate. In the event that the search highlights a safeguarding concern in respect of any pupil, the School will follow the procedures set out in the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

School staff can confiscate, retain or dispose of a pupil's property as a disciplinary penalty. The law protects staff from liability in any proceedings brought against them for any loss or damage to items they have confiscated, provided they acted lawfully. Staff will always consider whether confiscation is proportionate and consider any relevant special circumstances.

The School will keep a record of all searches carried out, including the results of any search, and the actions taken following that search.

EYFS CHILDREN

Even the School's youngest children are encouraged to behave towards each other with kindness and consideration. They are encouraged to learn to look after their own possessions and to respect others' possessions. We expect them to be honest, helpful, and polite, and to work hard and to listen to others. They should respect everyone and learn to value differences and diversity. Hannah Cowan, the Head of EYFS, is in charge of the management of behaviour in the EYFS setting.

We explain to our EYFS children why some forms of behaviour are unacceptable and hurtful to others. We rarely need to impose sanctions in the EYFS setting; but sometimes we may remove a privilege for hurtful behaviour. Occasionally, a child may be sent to see Miss Cowan the Head of EYFS, who will explain the inappropriateness of a particular action and introduce a more appropriate action; but such instances are rare. Parents are always informed when any sanction or reproof is needed towards their child, and in cases of repeated instances of hurtful or inappropriate behaviour, parents will be invited into the School to discuss the situation with the child's teacher and the Head of EYFS, to agree a joint way of handling the difficulty.

Copies of our Behaviour and Sanctions Policy for EYFS children can be found on the school's website.

CHARLOTTE HOUSE'S RESPONSE TO BULLYING

At Charlotte House, we always treat bullying very seriously. It conflicts sharply with our social and moral principles, and potentially with our policy on equal opportunities for pupils, and will not be tolerated. When incidents of bullying do occur, they are dealt with quickly and taken seriously. We will never dismiss or downplay bullying as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up". All reported incidents of bullying will be dealt with by staff in accordance with this policy. Staff will reassure any victim(s) that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

Charlotte House understands that bullying can be so serious that it may cause physical, emotional, and psychological damage, such as eating disorders, self-harm and even suicide. Stopping violence and ensuring the immediate physical safety of pupils is our first priority, however, we acknowledges that emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical bullying, and therefore staff will use their discretion when dealing with an incident of bullying within the parameters of this policy and our Behaviour and Sanctions Policy. *Whilst bullying itself is not a*

specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment, sexual violence and assault, sexting, the sharing of nudes/semi-nudes (in certain circumstances), upskirting and to violent and threatening behaviour. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying: everybody has the right to be treated with respect.

We recognise that children with SEND or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges and may be more prone to peer on peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children. We also recognise that certain children may face additional barriers to reporting an incident because of their vulnerability, disability, sex, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation.

Pupils who are victims of bullying will always be supported and will be reassured that they will be kept safe. Pupils who have engaged in bullying behaviour will be subject to appropriate disciplinary sanction and will also, where possible, be supported in learning different ways of behaving and offered support for their own circumstances, where appropriate.

Bullying which occurs on school trips, online, or outside of the School's premises will not be tolerated any more than bullying on school premises. Teachers will, where appropriate, discipline pupils for misbehaviour online, outside school premises and outside school hours

SIGNS OF BULLYING

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- unwillingness to return to school;
- loss of appetite;
- displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet;
- failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others;
- books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing, or are damaged;
- diminished levels of self-confidence;
- change in habits (eg giving up music lessons, change of accent or vocabulary)
- frequent visits to the school office with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches;
- unexplained cuts and bruises;
- frequent absence, erratic attendance;
- choosing the company of adults;
- displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact;
- difficulty in sleeping, bed wetting, nightmares;
- talking of suicide or running away from home or school.

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying will always be investigated by teachers and, where deemed appropriate, brought to the attention of parents in accordance with this policy.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

We take the following preventative measures to create an environment that prevents bullying from becoming a problem in the first place:

- Charlotte House promotes an ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat each other with respect at all times, inside and outside of school;

- All new pupils (including EYFS pupils) are briefed thoroughly on our expected standards of behaviour. They are told what to do if they encounter bullying. We guarantee that those who report bullying in good faith will not be punished, will be taken seriously and will be supported and kept safe;
- Our school has an open environment where pupils feel safe to share information about anything that is upsetting or worrying them. We encourage girls to tell a member of staff at once if they know or suspect bullying is taking place.
- Our PSHE programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through school. The programme is structured to enforce messages about community involvement and taking care of each other. It focuses on the importance of equality and diversity and pupils are encouraged to avoid prejudicial and exclusionary language;
- Our curriculum tackles such issues as prejudiced behaviour and gives children an open forum to talk things through rather than seek one on one opportunities to be harmful to one another;
- Other lessons, particularly English and RE, provide opportunities to highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce an anti-bullying message by developing social skills and by teaching moral and spiritual values that show all bullying is unacceptable.
- Our pupils are part of changing their circumstances and, through the school council and within their forms, we encourage them to support changes and develop 'rules of acceptable behaviour'.
- We emphasise and involve pupils in the positive ethos in school; one where they understand the boundaries of behaviour before it becomes abusive.
- Staff will not dismiss issues as 'banter' or 'growing up' or compare them to their own experiences of childhood. Staff will consider each issue and each individual in their own right before taking action. Incidents of poor behaviour or bullying are logged promptly in the Behaviour and Bullying book, found in the staffroom, and on 3sys.
- Fortnightly Pupil Concerns meetings are held, with minutes logged on 3sys as well as distributed to staff including those not attending meetings. Any concerns are monitored and investigated and staff are made aware.
- We use appropriate assemblies to explain the school policy on bullying, cyberbullying, prejudiced and discriminatory bullying as well as internet safety and create an open forum to discuss and explore these problems. Children are made aware from posters around the school and in assemblies of where to access help or call helplines such as ChildLine and their number 0800 1111;
- Pupils, staff and parents are educated to understand how to use the internet safely. For pupils, this takes place through dedicated computing lessons. We offer guidance on social network sites and keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe. We deliver e-safety talks to staff and parents and advice is sent out via email. Our filtering and monitoring systems are reviewed at least annually to ensure children's safeguarding needs are met.

- The school has comprehensive technical provision in place to ensure the safety of pupils. This includes anti-virus software, web-filtering software (“open DNS”) and classroom and desktop management software. Most unsafe or undesirable websites will automatically be blocked from the children’s access, however, certain rules will be applied for times when that does not happen (See Appendix 1 of the Internet and E-safety Policy). The web filtering system is monitored regularly by P. Woodcock, the DSL.
- The Head & Bursar will keep abreast of current issues and guidance and any changes will be relayed to the staff/governors as appropriate, in order to update the school e-Safety teaching and policies accordingly. As appropriate, the information will then be relayed to parents.
- All parents and Prep School pupils are asked to sign a form agreeing to Charlotte House Computer and Internet rules, before access is allowed. These incorporate measures to help ensure the e-safety of the pupils in school and prevent cyberbullying.
- Staff are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class; they patrol the school site, including the dining room and garden areas at lunch and break times, and supervise breakfast and after-school clubs.
- In the second half of the Autumn Term we conduct our bullying audit; the whole school discusses bullying and our anti-bullying policy. All the girls from forms I-VI complete a questionnaire; EYFS discuss bullying as a whole class. The results of these questionnaires are analysed by the Deputy Head and a report is fed back to the governing body. This report is then used to help inform our actions and is considered when reviewing this policy.
- Due attention is paid to pupils with special education needs, including dyslexia, and support offered to enable them to access bullying prevention.

REPORTING BULLYING

Upon induction, all new members of staff are given training and guidance on our anti-bullying policy and on how to react to, and record allegations of bullying at Charlotte House, including cyberbullying. We will ensure that all school staff understand the principles of the school's policy, our legal responsibilities, actions to be taken to resolve and prevent incidents of bullying from arising or escalating and also details of sources of further support;

Charlotte House recognises that certain children may be more at risk of bullying than others and may require additional support when dealing with an incident of bullying, for example children with SEND and/or certain health conditions, and LGBTQ+ pupils. We will ensure that staff receive appropriate training to be able to understand the specific needs of our pupils, and to enable all staff to provide an inclusive environment for all pupils;

Any incidents will be reported to the Form Teacher who will then share the information with the Deputy Head who may in turn notify the Head.

The girls are encouraged to speak to any member of staff if they have experienced or witnessed any form of bullying from staff or their peers.

All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. These are then monitored and recorded. Our records *are securely kept* in the purple folder in the staff room and monitored regularly by SMT to look at patterns of behaviour.

All our staff are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority, are alert to possible signs of bullying and know when to apply our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy . INSET sessions are held regularly, using outside experts.

Charlotte House has the right, and duty, to investigate incidents of bullying involving our pupils which take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips, online, or that otherwise occur outside of school. We have the right to take disciplinary measures in respect of such incidents. Disciplinary measures will be taken in accordance with our Behaviour and Sanctions Policy and will be applied in a fair, consistent, and reasonable manner, taking into account the needs of pupils with SEND and certain health conditions, and vulnerable pupils.

Staff will always consider the motive behind bullying behaviour and whether it raises any concerns for the welfare of the perpetrator(s). If staff reasonably suspect that a pupil may be suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, they should follow the procedures set out in the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and discuss their concerns with the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) without delay.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH REPORTED BULLYING

If an incident of alleged bullying is reported, we follow a set procedure to ensure the incident is dealt with swiftly and fairly. See Appendix A

Sanctions may include:

- loss of playtime;
- loss of Golden Time for pre-prep girls;
- loss of other privileges;
- written apologies;
- segregation from others at key times, including lunchtime;
- removal to another class.

Strategies to encourage positive behaviour may include:

- sticker chart;
- housepoints for positive behaviour;
- report card.

STAFF TRAINING

As part of our INSET programme/ staff meetings, staff are trained to understand the principles of this policy and their legal responsibilities. Staff are trained to recognise bullying whether in-school or cyber bullying and through INSET we discuss techniques to deal with this issue to ensure all parties are supported. We use a range of resources to train staff on this issue including on-line training, in-house expertise and NSPCC resources. This may be an area identified by a member of staff in their CPD and appraisal; if so the school fully supports that member of staff to access further training.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

This policy is readily available on the school's website and on request, which parents are made aware of, so that they are clear on our approach to bullying and what to do if their child experiences bullying.

As part of our annual information evening, staff talk to parents and explain about e-safety and what they can do to support their child develop resilience in this area and reduce vulnerability to cyberbullying. There is also information in the Parents' Handbook.

The Behaviour and Sanctions Policy is available on the website and this policy is made available to parents upon request.

If parents know or suspect that their child, or another pupil, is being bullied, they should contact us without delay. All concerns will be taken seriously.

We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures and all other aspects and implementation of this anti-bullying policy.

We notify parents of both the alleged perpetrator and victim of any concerns we have relating to bullying. Parental support is sought in helping to deal with such events. (See Appendix A for more details as to when and how parental involvement is sought).

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Parents and pupils are encouraged to use our Complaints Procedure (which is published on our website) if they feel that any concerns about bullying (or anything else) are not being addressed properly. Parents of EYFS children should be aware that they have the right to refer a complaint directly to Ofsted, if they are unhappy with the way in which their complaint has been handled (the Complaints Procedure explains how to complain to Ofsted).

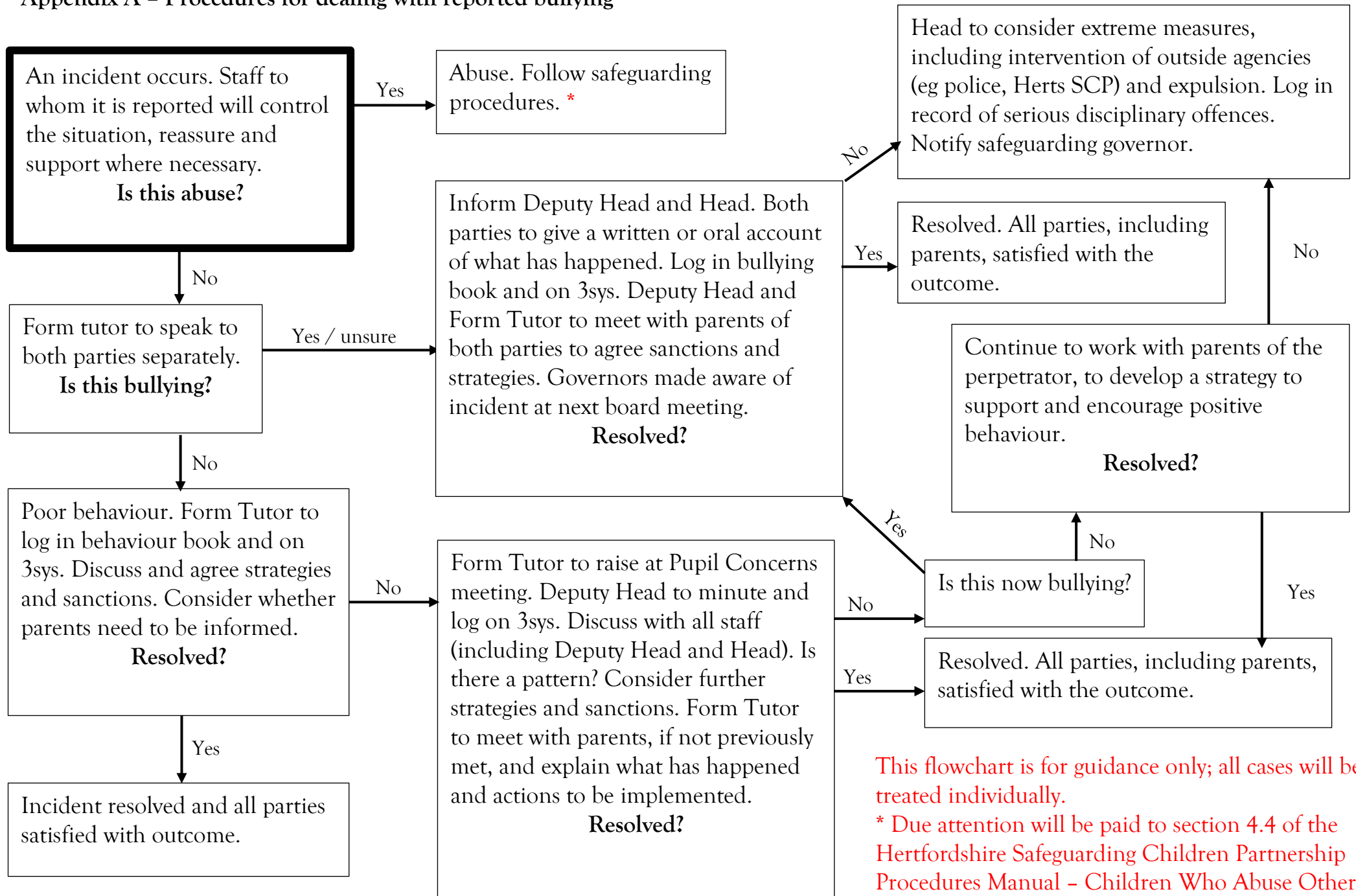
MONITORING AND REVIEW

Charlotte House will record all incidents of reported bullying in accordance with this policy.

The Head or Deputy Head will review all incidents of reported bullying to help identify patterns of behaviour, so that we can take appropriate steps to address bullying behaviours within the school. Records of bullying incidents will also be used to evaluate the effectiveness of our anti-bullying procedures, and to highlight any necessary amendments.

This policy is reviewed and updated at least annually, by the Senior Management Team and the Board of Governors.

Appendix A – Procedures for dealing with reported bullying



This flowchart is for guidance only; all cases will be treated individually.

* Due attention will be paid to section 4.4 of the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures Manual – Children Who Abuse Others