

Anti-bullying policy

Silver Birch School



Approved by:	Noel Thomas
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Last reviewed on:	September 2022
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Next review due by:	September 2023
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Statement of Intent:

At Silver Birch school we are committed to providing a warm, caring, and safe environment for all our young people so that they can learn and or play in a relaxed and secure environment.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in our school. We take all incidents of bullying seriously. Bullying hurts. No-one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect and students who are bullying others need to learn different ways of behaving.

We acknowledge that bullying does happen from time to time – indeed, it would unrealistic to claim that it does not. When bullying does occur, everyone should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively in accordance with our anti-bullying policy. We are a 'TELLING' school. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff and we provide several opportunities for this.

Visitors are welcome at any time, they will receive a friendly and polite welcome, and will see:

- Pupils are learning
- Pupils and staff care for each other
- There are high standards of behaviour
- Pupils are happy

Aims and Objectives:

All members of the school have a responsibility to recognise bullying when it occurs and take appropriate action in accordance with the school policy.

This will happen in the following ways:

- The school will meet the legal requirement to have an anti-bullying policy in place;
- The school will work closely with other professional agencies to ensure that children stay safe as stated in [The Children Act 1989](#), [The SEN and Disability Act 2001](#), [The Government Green Paper 'Every Child Matters' 2003 \(outcome 2\)](#), [The Children Act 2004](#) and [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021](#);
- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents/carers will have an understanding of what bullying is;
- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff will know what the school policy is on bullying and will consistently and swiftly follow it when bullying is reported;
- All pupils and parents/carers will know what the College policy is on bullying and what they can do if bullying occurs;
- Pupils and parents/carers will be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported;
- School initiatives (staff training, celebration assemblies etc.) and proactive teaching strategies (PHSE [Personal, Health & Social Education] lessons) will be used throughout the school to reduce the opportunities for bullying to occur;
- A positive, caring ethos will be created within the school environment where everyone can work, play, and express themselves, free from the fear of being bullied;

What Is Bullying?

Silver Birch School has adopted the following collaborative definition of bullying which is our shared understanding of what bullying is:

Bullying is any deliberate, hurtful, upsetting, frightening or threatening behaviour by an individual or a group towards other people. It is repeated over a period of time and it is very difficult for the victims to defend themselves (remember STOP – it happens Several Times On Purpose). Bullying is mean and results in worry, fear, pain, and distress to the victim(s).

Bullying can be:

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures), ridicule, humiliation
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, making rude remarks, making fun of someone
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, throwing stones, biting, spitting, punching or any other forms of violence, taking or hiding someone's things
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, making fun of culture and religion
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive or sexist comments (see Sexual Violence and Sexual harassment sections of this policy)
- Homophobic because of or focusing on the issue of sexuality;
- Transphobic because of or focusing on their identity;
- Online/cyber - setting up 'hate websites', sending offensive messages, live streams, chats, graphics or emails and abusing the victims via technology or social media via their mobile phones
- Targeting difference - Any unfavourable or negative comments, gestures or actions made to someone relating to their disability or special educational needs

Bullying is not:

It is important to understand that bullying is not the odd occasion of falling out with friends, name-calling, arguments or when the occasional trick or joke is played on someone. It is bullying if it is done several times on purpose (STOP). Children 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 children'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.

Where does bullying happen?

It can happen anywhere – in the classroom, in the corridor, in the toilets, in the dining hall, in the playground. Bullying may also happen on the way to and from school. In such cases, the Head teacher is empowered by law to deal with such incidents but must do so in accordance with the school's policy.

At Silver Birch School, we are concerned with our children's conduct and welfare outside as well as inside school and we will do what we can to address any bullying issues that occur off the school premises. The following steps may be taken:

- Talk to the local Community Police Officer about problems on the streets
- Talk to the Headteachers of other schools whose children may be involved in bullying off the premises
- Map out safe routes to school for children, linking them to the School Travel Plan

- Discuss coping strategies with parents/carers
- Talk to the children about how to handle or avoid bullying outside the school premises

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate, by different signs or behaviour, that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and investigate further if a child:

- Is frightened of walking to or from school
- Doesn't want to go to school/in the taxi
- Begs to be driven to school
- Changes their usual routine/route to school
- Begins truanting
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Feels ill in the morning
- Begins to underperform in school work
- Comes home with clothes torn or personal belongings damaged
- Has possessions go "missing"
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully)
- Has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Comes home starving (money/snack/sandwiches have been stolen)
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Starts swearing or using aggressive language for no apparent reason
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be taken seriously and investigated as soon as possible.

What can you do if you are being bullied?

Wherever you are in school, you have the right to feel safe. Nobody has the right to make you feel unhappy. If someone is bullying you, it is important to remember that it is not your fault and there are people who can help you.

Bullying of children with Special Educational Needs

Silver Birch School is an inclusive school. We provide a secure, accepting, safe and stimulating environment where everyone is valued for who they are. We have some pupils who have learning disabilities and/or communication difficulties. Everyone involved in the school is very aware that these children can be especially vulnerable to bullying and we are therefore particularly vigilant at all times. High attainers, gifted or talented pupils can also be affected by bullying. Staff will treat this type of bullying as seriously and in the same way as any other type of bullying.

Procedures for reporting and responding to bullying incidents

All staff will respond calmly and consistently to all allegations and incidents of bullying at Silver Birch School. They will be taken seriously by all staff and dealt with impartially and promptly. All those involved will have the opportunity to be heard. Staff will protect and support all children involved whilst allegations and incidents are investigated and resolved. The following step-by-step procedure will be used for reporting and responding to bullying allegations or incidents:

1. Report all bullying allegations and incidents to staff.
2. Staff will make sure the victim(s) is and feels safe.
3. Appropriate advice will be given to help the victim(s).
4. Staff will listen and speak to all children involved about the incident separately.
5. The problem will be identified and possible solutions suggested.
6. Staff will attempt to adopt a problem-solving approach which will move children on from them having to justify their behaviour.
7. Appropriate action will be taken quickly to end the bullying behaviour or threats of bullying.
8. Staff will reinforce to the bully that their behaviour is unacceptable.
9. The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place and appropriate sanctions applied.
10. If possible, the pupils will be reconciled.
11. An attempt will be made, and support given, to help the bully (bullies) understand and change his/her/their behaviour.
12. In serious cases parents/carers will be informed and will be invited to come into school for a meeting to discuss the problem.
13. After the incident has been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.
14. Bullying incidents will be discussed regularly at staff meetings.
15. If necessary and appropriate, the Child Protection Officer in school, Social Services or police will be consulted.

Strategies for the prevention and reduction of bullying

Whole school initiatives and proactive teaching strategies will be used throughout the school to develop a positive learning environment with the aim of reducing the opportunities for bullying to occur.

These can include:

- The curriculum used whenever possible to raise awareness, increase understanding, reinforce the ethos of Silver Birch School and enable pupils to develop effective strategies to combat bullying behaviour
- All staff will be alert to signs of bullying and will act promptly and firmly in line with this policy
- Pupils will be strongly advised to report any incidence of bullying, reiterating it is the responsibility of everyone to report knowledge of bullying to a member of staff
- PHSE (Personal, Health & Social Education) scheme of work to support this policy
- Using praise and rewards to reinforce good behaviour in line with school Behaviour Code of Conduct signed by pupils
- Encouraging the whole school community to model appropriate behaviour towards one another
- Organising regular anti-bullying training for all staff

Monitoring and evaluation of the policy

To ensure this policy is effective, it will be regularly monitored and evaluated. Bullying and behaviour incident forms will be used to gauge the effectiveness of the policy. Following an annual review any amendments will be made to the policy and everyone informed. An annual report will then be issued to governors and the policy will be distributed to all parents/carers.

Sources of further information, support and help

There is a vast amount of information and guidance available about bullying that can provide a wide range of support and help. The following list is just a small selection of the support available that teachers, parents and children have found useful.

Name of organisation Website

Act Against Bullying	www.actagainstbullying.com
Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)	www.ace-ed.org.uk
Anti-bully	www.antibully.org.uk
Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA)	www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
Anti-bullying Network	www.antibullying.net
Beat-bullying	www.beatbullying.org.uk
Bully Free Zone	www.bullyfreezone.co.uk
Bullying Online	www.bullying.co.uk
BBC	www.bbc.co.uk
Childline	www.childline.org.uk
Kidscape	www.kidscape.org.uk
Beyond bullying	www.beyondbullying.com
NSPCC	www.nspcc.org.uk
Parentline Plus	www.parentlineplus.org.uk
The Children's Legal Centre	www.childrenslegalcentre.com
The Office of the Children's Commissioner	www.childrenscommissioner.org.uk
UK Government website	www.direct.gov.uk