

Anti-Bullying Policy



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Responsible Person: Karen Holmes

Preventing Bullying Policy

This policy recognises and interprets our responsibility for the well-being of our staff, pupils, guests, visitors, the local community and outside agencies. The Preventing Bullying Policy should be read alongside our Relational Policy.

We recognise that the behaviour of some of our students may have an impact on other people, events or objects. Our aim is to support students to gain an understanding of their behaviours and emotions, and how to cope in a variety of situations and contexts while building relationships and practising social interactions. If our students possess the knowledge and understanding of bullying and the effect their behaviours may have on others, then we would expect them to follow the rules of our preventing bullying policy, and we would support students through the process if necessary.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at the school. If bullying does occur, all students should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Students who are bullying need to be supported to learn different ways of behaving and coping. We will respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

The Anti Bullying Alliance defines bullying as:

“The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online”.

Bullying can be:

- **Emotional:** Being unfriendly, tormenting, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidation
- **Excluding:** deliberately excluding and isolating people
- **Physical:** Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- **Verbal:** Name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, graffiti, gestures, discrimination against age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race and ethnicity, sex and sexual orientation, religion or belief.
- **Sexual:** Unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, sexually abusive comments, exposure to inappropriate images or films
- **Online / Cyber:** posting on social media, sharing photos, threats by text messaging and calls and misuse of associated technology, social exclusion
- **Indirect** - Can include the exploitation of individuals

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is our first priority, but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical. Nearly all of our students at the school are supported on a 1:1 basis, and levels of support are high within our small groups provision, which means there is always a high level of supervision for all learners. This enables us to carefully and effectively monitor bullying and support the learners to adapt their behaviour and language, discuss their actions, and put plans in place to support behaviour change.

The intense levels of support our students receive at the school, enables our staff to develop positive and effective relationships with our learners, and understand behaviours that the learners display or may struggle with being directed at them. A number of our students have experienced bullying during their life which needs to be taken into account when we are dealing with specific cases.

Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can in itself have a significant impact on all students, and if left unchallenged or dismissed can lead to reluctance to report other behaviour. We set clear expectations about behaviour that is deemed acceptable, and through early intervention, personalised programme design and proactive ways of working, we aim to prevent negative behaviours from escalation.

Safeguarding children and young people

When there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm' a bullying incident will be addressed as a child protection concern under the Children Act 1989. Where this is the case, our staff should discuss with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead and report their concerns to their local authority children's social care and work with them to take appropriate action.

However, external support can be given to students whether or not it is deemed a child protection concern. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, we may need to draw on a range of external services to support the student who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

Criminal law

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour, or communications, could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986. If school staff feel that an offence may have been committed, they should seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, any person who sends an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender, is guilty of an offence if their purpose in sending it was to cause distress or anxiety to the recipient.

Objectives of this Policy

- Develop a calm environment that is free from disruption and in which education is the primary focus so our pupils can learn
- Develop a sense of caring and respect for one another.
- Build caring and co-operative relationships.
- Support students to understand what appropriate and positive behaviour is.
- Make it easy for students to report bullying where they are able and make sure they feel assured they will be listened to. For students who are not able to express their feelings, particular attention should be paid to:
 - Mood
 - Engagement
 - Behaviour
 - Body Language
 - Enjoyment
 - Attention
 - Relationship changes

- The Headteacher, Learning Managers, Teachers, Teaching Assistants, non-teaching staff, students and parents/carers should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- The Headteacher, Learning Managers, Teachers, Teaching Assistants and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All students and parents/carers should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- We take bullying seriously. Students and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice

While bullied children will not be routinely considered as requiring SEN support, schools and where appropriate local authorities, should provide support in a proportionate and tailored way to meet individual needs. The relevant statutory guidance, the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years, sets out how developing a graduated response to the varying levels of SEN among children and young people is the best way to offer support. Some bullied children will have SEN.

Promoting Appropriate and Positive Behaviour

- The school's curriculum prioritises the need to support children in the development of skills for building relationships, respect and working appropriately and positively with others
- Our SMSC curriculum aims to support our young people to gain knowledge and understanding of bullying, and cyberbullying
- Each child will be supported to develop effective, consistent but progressive communication methods helping them to express themselves, understand and be understood
- All staff will be trained on, and understand the principles and purpose of our anti-bullying policy, its legal responsibilities, how to resolve problems and where to seek support.
- Create an inclusive and safe environment.
- Celebrate success.
- Where possible, staff to talk to students about issues of difference
- The Headteacher will respond immediately to any request from a parent or carer to investigate incidents of bullying.

Procedures for Supporting Students

1. Report bullying incidents on CPOMS
2. In serious cases the student's parents / carers may be informed and may be asked to come to a meeting to discuss the adaptations that need to be made and the strategies needed to implement the changes.
3. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
4. Students will be fully supported in recognising and understanding the reasons behind their behaviours, and the impact it may be having on others

Support for staff who are bullied

It is important that schools take measures to prevent and tackle bullying among pupils. But it is equally important that schools make it clear that bullying of staff, whether by students, parents or colleagues, is unacceptable.

Reporting and Recording Bullying

The ability to report and record incidents of bullying behaviour is a crucial part of our anti-bullying strategy. We aim to make it as easy as possible for our students to report incidents of bullying and actively encourage our young people to report anything they see, hear or experience that makes them feel uncomfortable. There is always a mechanism for our students to report bullying should they feel they are being bullied to any member of staff, Designated Safeguarding Leads or the Headteacher. Creating an environment where our young people feel safe to report bullying is an essential part of our ethos, and the way we support a young person to do so and respond to their reports of bullying is dependent upon their particular learning and communicative needs.