

# Anti-Bullying Policy

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## **Statement of Intent – Together we will stop bullying**

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students. Bullying of any kind is never acceptable behaviour at our school. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect and no one deserves to experience bullying.

If bullying does occur, all students should be able to tell a member of staff and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly, severely and effectively. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to inform a member of staff.

In sharing this policy, we aim

- to make all those connected with the school aware of not only what bullying is, but our opposition to it
- to ensure all stakeholders know what the school's policy is on bullying and what they should do if bullying arises
- to clarify the school's response to any bullying incidents that may occur
- to make clear each person's responsibilities with regard to the eradication of bullying behaviour in our school.

## **Our definition of bullying**

Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online.

(Anti-Bullying Alliance Definition, 2023)

### **Bullying can be, but is not limited to:**

- Emotional: isolating others, tormenting, hiding books, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidating, excluding, manipulation and coercion.
- Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, biting, pinching etc
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic, bi-phobic and transphobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films etc. (See Child on Child Abuse Policy)

- Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, abuse and threats, ridiculing, belittling
- Online: posting on social media, sharing photos without consent, sending unkind messages, social exclusion (See also Online Safety policy.)
- Indirect - can include the exploitation of individuals

### **Bullying is not...**

It is important to understand that bullying is different to 'falling out'. It is vital for children to have the opportunity to select and build friendships, and the making and breakdowns of friendships are an important part of growing up. It is essential to teach children the skills to repair relationships and enable them to utilise these without adults always intervening on their behalf.

Sometimes, on these occasions, adult intervention may be necessary. However, it may not be classed as bullying when children have had a disagreement or physical altercation, but there is no imbalance of power.

### **Bullying and Keeping Children Safe**

At Filton Avenue Primary School, we take bullying extremely seriously, and we understand that bullying is a form of child-on-child abuse, and therefore a safeguarding issue (see Safeguarding policy). 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.

### **Bullying and Discrimination**

At Filton Avenue Primary School, we promote inclusion and diversity. In line with the Equality Act 2010, we will eliminate any discrimination or harassment on grounds of protected characteristics:

- Disability
- Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- Religion, belief or lack of religion/belief
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Gender reassignment

- Being married or in a civil partnership
- Being pregnant or having a child

We also promote fundamental British values, by proactively challenging derogatory and discriminatory language and behaviour, including that which is racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disablist in nature. We take a victim-centred approach and will challenge the use of prejudice-related language or behaviours in our school even if it appears to be being done without any intent. We will record this language and behaviour, even if it represents a one-off incident, for monitoring purposes.

We also recognise that bullying can be related to appearance or health or having a special educational need. Bullying of young carers, looked after children and bullying related to home circumstances can also occur. Although all these areas do not currently receive protection under the Equality Act 2010, bullying for these reasons is just as serious. There is no hierarchy of bullying – all forms will be taken equally seriously and dealt with appropriately.

## **Stopping bullying wherever it takes place**

Bullying can take place between:

- young people
- young people and staff
- between staff
- individuals or groups

We recognise that bullying can take place in a variety of places including:

- the journey to and from school
- the local community
- in school
- in extracurricular activities linked to the school such as breakfast and after school clubs, sports, and school trips.
- and online (both during and outside of the school day).

The school acknowledges its responsibilities to support families if bullying occurs off the premises. The school reserves the right to discipline for behaviour off the premises, where incidents impact on relationships within school.

## **Online bullying**

The increasing use of digital technology and the internet has also provided new and particularly intrusive ways for bullies to reach their victims. Whilst most incidents of online bullying occur outside school, we will offer support and guidance to parents/carers and their children who experience online bullying and will treat it with the same severity as any other forms of bullying.

Online bullying can include:

- Hacking into someone's accounts/sites
- Posting prejudice /hate messages
- Impersonating someone online
- Public posting of images
- Excluding from activities
- Threats and manipulation

We will ensure that our children are taught safe ways to use the internet (see online safety policy) and encourage good online behaviour.

## **Preventing bullying**

At Filton Avenue Primary School, we believe that our anti-bullying procedures should not start at the point at which a child has been bullied. We proactively gather information about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict and develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place. This might involve talking to pupils about issues of difference, perhaps in lessons, through dedicated events or projects, or through assemblies. Staff themselves will be able to determine what will work best for their pupils, depending on the particular issues they need to address.

The DfE recognises that schools which excel at tackling bullying have created an ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat one another and the school staff with respect because they know that this is the right way to behave. Our school values of CARE (Collaboration, Aspiration, Respect and Endeavour) and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others permeate the whole school environment. These values are reinforced by staff (See Behaviour Policy).

We also take a proactive approach to preventing bullying, by:

- promoting an inclusive ethos in our school

- building a shared understanding of the signs and symptoms that indicate someone may be experiencing bullying
- showing zero tolerance for offensive language or comments
- providing clear guidance for staff and pupils on appropriate physical boundaries and education for all ages on consensual touch through PSHE lessons
- the creation of safe spaces at break and lunch times for children who may feel lonely or isolated.
- educating staff, children and parents about bullying issues and the action they can take to stop bullying (e.g., curriculum content, parent and carer events, staff training, participation in Anti-Bullying Week)
- regular inclusion of bullying issues in assemblies and class time
- displaying safeguarding team around the school so all children know staff who can help if they are worried about something
- encouraging and supporting OPALs to be alerted to bullying behaviour and be there to help other pupils

## **Recognising signs and symptoms**

Changes in behaviour may indicate that a child is being bullied. All adults should be aware of these possible signs and should investigate if a child

- is frightened of walking to or from their school
- doesn't want to go into particular areas of the school e.g. toilets, library, dinner hall
- is unwilling to go to school
- becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking
- changes in behaviours and appearance

*These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.*

## **Reporting bullying and procedures**

1. All bullying incidents should be reported to the class teacher or a member of the leadership team. (Worry boxes are available if a child does not want to voice a concern).

2. The incidents will be recorded by the member of staff on CPOMs and the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be alerted. If online bullying has occurred copies of the bullying will be attached.
3. Parents/carers should be informed and will be asked to come into a meeting to discuss the problem.
4. If necessary and appropriate, police and/or social services will be consulted.
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying will be investigated, and interventions carried out quickly to support the victim and help the bully to change their behaviour.
6. If parents and carers are not satisfied that the bullying is being dealt with appropriately, they should follow our complaints procedure. (See Complaints Policy)

## **Responding to bullying**

If bullying is identified, there will be clear communication with the children involved and the parents and carers of all parties, including safety plans where necessary and dates for their review

The response to bullying may include:

- explaining the role of the bystander and the ways we can take positive action if we witness or hear of a bullying situation (e.g., lead the person experiencing the bullying to a safe place, show we are not in support of the bullying behaviour)
- creating safe, confidential spaces for pupils and parents and carers to share their experiences and concerns with a focus on the impact the behaviour is having and the help they need from you to make the bullying stop.
- mental health and emotional wellbeing support for both the victim and the perpetrator
- referral to external agencies to provide more specialist support or mentoring
- the use of restorative approaches
- the use of home / school communication books
- monitoring by pastoral team
- additional support for the children involved (e.g. assertiveness workshops, counselling, behaviour management support, referral to CAMHs).
- peer support/peer mentoring
- disciplinary action, which may include:
  - The child who has displayed bullying behaviour may be asked to genuinely apologise, and other consequences, such as those in our behaviour policy, may be applied
  - Involvement of external agencies e.g. police/ children's services (e.g. when a child is harmed, when there are threats of harm, when illegal content has been shared online etc)

- Use of a behaviour contract e.g. report card
- Liaison with parent/carer/social worker
- In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered
- All parties will be challenged and may be sanctioned for false accusations where there is sufficient evidence that events did not occur.

After the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

Bullying rarely takes place in isolation so we will always consider the involvement of the wider peer group and additional work we may need to do to reinforce the school's position on bullying or to explore different aspects of bullying with the peer group (e.g., if there has been an incident of homophobic bullying, is this indicative of a wider culture of homophobic abuse that needs to be addressed).

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Children**

- To report witnessed incidents of bullying to an adult in school.
- Tell an adult if they feel they are being bullied or write a note.
- Show respect for all other children in school.

### **Parents and Carers**

Parents and Carers who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying or shown bullying behaviour, should contact their child's class teacher or a member of the school leadership team immediately.

When talking with teachers about bullying:

- Be as specific as possible about what your child says has happened, give dates, places and names of other children involved.
- Stay in touch with the school and let them know if things do or do not improve

### **All Staff Responsibilities**

- To create a school climate of mutual support and respect, making bullying behaviour less likely. When children feel they are important and belong to a friendly and welcoming school bullying is far less likely to be part of their behaviour.
- To proactively tackle issues arising with children to prevent bullying occurring
- To be alert to the possibility of bullying occurring, to monitor children for signs and symptoms of bullying and to encourage children to report bullying
- To record any reported incidents of bullying
- To listen to all parties involved in incidents
- To investigate incidents promptly and as fully as possible
- To take appropriate action and to refer to Leadership Team as appropriate
- To address bullying issues through PSHE and other lessons

### **Leadership Team Responsibilities**

- To investigate incidents further where bullying is suspected and complete safety planning where bullying is identified
- To share with parents/carers of the victim and bully, incidents of serious and /or persistent bullying and discuss next steps

- To facilitate communication and consultation within school and relevant agencies when appropriate

### **DSL Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of the DSL to implement the school anti-bullying strategy and to ensure that all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the school policy and know how to deal with incidents of bullying behaviour. The DSL ensures that all children know that bullying is wrong, and that it is unacceptable behaviour in this school.

The DSL ensures that all staff receive sufficient training to be equipped to deal with all incidents of bullying behaviour.

### **Governance**

The School Improvement Board supports the Headteacher in all attempts to eliminate bullying behaviour from our school. The School Improvement Board monitors the incidents of bullying behaviour that occur, and reviews the effectiveness of the school policy regularly. The School Improvement Board requires the Headteacher to keep accurate records of all incidents of bullying behaviour and to report to the board on request about the effectiveness of school anti-bullying strategies.

A parent who is dissatisfied with the way the school has dealt with a bullying incident can ask Trust in Learning Academies to look into the matter (See Complaints policy).

### **Related Policies**

Behaviour Policy

Safeguarding Policy

Online Safety Policy

Complaints Policy

Child on Child Abuse Policy

## **Acronyms and definitions**

CARE - Collaboration, Aspiration, Respect and Endeavour

CPOMs – A tool use to record behaviour and safeguarding concerns

DfE - Department for Education

DSL- Designated Safeguarding Lead

OPALs – A student group who support children in the playground

PSHE- Personal Social Health Education