



Happiness and Wellbeing at Our Roots

# Anti-bullying Policy

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## Statement of intent

Alfreton Park School believes that all children and staff are entitled to learn and practice in a safe and supportive environment; this means being free from all forms of bullying behaviour. This policy outlines how instances of bullying are dealt with, including the procedures to prevent occurrences of bullying.

We aim to promote an inclusive, tolerant and supportive ethos in our school.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 outlines several legal obligations regarding the school's response to bullying. Under section 89, schools must have measures in place to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst children.

All stakeholders work collectively to ensure bullying is not tolerated amongst children or adults, under any circumstances.

NB: It is understood that children of 3 and 4 years and many with SEND, are not developmentally capable of 'bullying' in the severest sense of the word. Their levels of premeditation and their awareness of social consequence are not as sophisticated and mature as with older children and adults. When reference is made within this policy to bullying (in relation to children), it is understood that we are referring to unkind and disrespectful behaviour, rather than behaviour with malicious intent. This ensures consistency with the terminology and definitions taught in the RSHE curriculum.

Strategic overview and responsibilities lie with:

- Anti-Bullying Lead – Katie Turner
- Link Governor – Francine Franklin
- Headteacher – Josie O'Donnell

## 1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- Communications Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Education Act 2011
- DfE (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying'
- DfE (2021) 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
- DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education 2021'
- DfE (2020) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- British Values
- Code of Conduct for Staff Policy
- Wellbeing Policy

## 2. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, "bullying" is defined as persistent behaviour by an individual or group with the intention of verbally, physically, or emotionally harming another person or group. Bullying is generally characterised by:

- **Repetition:** Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over an extended period of time.
- **Intent:** The perpetrator means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental.
- **Targeting:** Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.
- **Power imbalance:** Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations.
- **Recipient:** If the recipient of the behaviour feels undermined, undervalued and/or demoralised

### 3. Types of bullying

Many kinds of behaviour can be considered bullying, and bullying can be related to almost anything.

Bullying is acted out through the following mediums:

- Verbal
- Physical
- Emotional
- Online (cyberbullying)

**Racist bullying:** Bullying another person based on their ethnic background or skin colour. Racist bullying is a criminal offence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Public Order Act 1986.

**Homophobic and biphobic bullying:** Bullying another person because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

**Transphobic bullying:** Bullying based on another person's gender identity or gender presentation, or for not conforming to dominant gender roles.

**Sexist bullying:** Bullying based on sexist attitudes expressed in a way to demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Sexist bullying may sometimes be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviours.

**Sexual bullying:** Bullying behaviour that has a physical, psychological, verbal or non-verbal sexual dimension or dynamic that subordinates, humiliates or intimidates another person. This is commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes.

**Ableist bullying:** Bullying behaviour that focusses on another person's disability or support needs; this can include mocking the individual's disability or their needs, using derogatory words or slurs in relation to an individual's disability, or deliberately excluding an individual because of their disability.

**Prejudicial bullying:** Bullying based on prejudices directed towards specific characteristics or experiences, e.g. religion or mental health issues.

**Relational bullying:** Bullying that primarily constitutes of excluding, isolating and ostracising someone – usually through verbal and emotional bullying.

**Socioeconomic bullying:** Bullying based on prejudices against the perceived social status of the victim, including, but not limited to, their economic status, their parents' occupations, their health or nutrition level, or the perceived "quality" of their clothing or belongings.

The above list is not exhaustive.

### 4. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for:

- Evaluating and reviewing this policy to ensure that it does not discriminate against any children or adults on the basis of their protected characteristics or backgrounds.
- The overall implementation and monitoring of this policy.
- Ensuring that the school adopts a tolerant and open-minded policy towards difference.
- Ensuring the school is inclusive.
- Analysing any bullying data to establish patterns and reviewing this policy in light of these.
- Ensuring that allegations of bullying between staff are listened to, taken seriously and acted upon to ensure a safe working environment
- Appointing a safeguarding link governor who will work with the Lead DSL to ensure the policies and practices relating to safeguarding, including the prevention of cyberbullying, are being implemented effectively.

The Head teacher is responsible for:

- Reviewing and amending this policy, accounting for new legislation and government guidance, and using staff experience of dealing with previous bullying incidents to improve procedures.
- Ensuring the updated CPD of SLT members, with regards to inclusion and behaviour
- Implementing the appropriate procedures to support staff members in school who experience bullying in any form.
- To hold to account, staff members who perpetrate bullying behaviour in school.
- Arranging appropriate training for all staff members, who have contact with children.

The Behaviour Lead is responsible for:

- Corresponding and meeting with parents where necessary.
- Providing a point of contact for children and parents.
- Providing a point of contact for staff who need to report bullying in school
- To report incidents to the Head Teacher or Chair of Governors as appropriate

Teachers and Teaching Assistants are responsible for:

- Being alert to social dynamics in school.
- Being available for children.
- Maintaining and following up on support for children
- Refraining from stereotyping when dealing with bullying.
- Sharing information with all staff, with regards to the wellbeing of children and colleagues.
- Keeping evidence of cyberbullying and informing a member of staff should they fall victim to cyberbullying.

## 5. Statutory implications

The school understands that, under the Equality Act 2010, it has a responsibility to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The school understands that, under the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998, it could have charges brought against it if it allows the rights of pupils to be breached by failing to take bullying seriously. The Head Teacher will ensure that this policy complies with the HRA; the Head Teacher understands that they cannot do this without fully involving their teaching staff.

Although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, some types of harassment, threatening behaviour and/or communications may be considered criminal offences:

- Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to electronically communicate with another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or in a way which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or contains information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by means of a public electronic communications network, a message, or other matter, that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information through any media, including internet sites.
- Other forms of bullying which are illegal and should be reported to the police include violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation, and hate crimes.

## 6. Prevention

All members of the school will be made aware of this policy and their responsibilities in relation to it. All staff members will receive training on identifying and dealing with the different types of bullying and how to address incidents between both children and adults.

The school will be alert to, and address, any mental health and wellbeing issues amongst children and staff, as these can be a cause, or a result, of bullying behaviour.

## 7. Signs of bullying

Staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a child or adult is a victim of bullying:

- Being frightened to travel to or from school/work
- Unwillingness to attend school/work
- Repeated or persistent absence from school/work
- Becoming anxious or lacking confidence
- Saying that they feel ill repeatedly
- Decreased involvement
- Lack of appetite
- Dysregulated emotional responses
- Unwillingness to use the internet or mobile devices
- Lack of eye contact
- Becoming short tempered

- Change in behaviour and attitude at home

Although the signs outlined above may not be due to bullying, they may be due to deeper social, emotional or mental health issues, so are still worth investigating. Children and adults who display a significant number of these signs will be approached by the MHFA/Inclusion and Behaviour Coordinator or Head Teacher to determine the underlying issues causing this behaviour.

## 8. Staff principles

The school will ensure that prevention is a prominent aspect of its anti-bullying vision.

All reports of bullying will be treated seriously, as will suspected bullying, and action will be taken immediately. Unpleasantness will always be challenged and will never be ignored.

If a member of staff believes a child is in danger, e.g. of being hurt, they will inform a DSL immediately.

## 9. Peer-on-peer abuse

All staff will be aware that children of any age and gender are capable of abusing their peers. Staff will take all instances of peer-on-peer abuse equally seriously regardless of the characteristics of the perpetrators or victims.

## 10. Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can take many forms and can go even further than face-to-face bullying by invading personal space and home life, and can target more than one person. It can also take place across age groups and target children, staff and others, and may take place inside school, within the wider community, at home or when travelling. It can sometimes draw bystanders into being accessories.

Cyberbullying can include the following:

- Threatening, intimidating or upsetting text messages
- Threatening or embarrassing pictures and video clips
- Disclosure of private sexual photographs or videos with the intent to cause distress
- Silent or abusive phone calls
- Using the victim's phone to harass others, to make them think the victim is responsible
- Threatening or bullying emails, possibly sent using a pseudonym or someone else's name
- Menacing or upsetting responses to someone in a chatroom
- Unpleasant messages sent via instant messaging
- Unpleasant or defamatory information posted to blogs, personal websites and social networking sites, e.g. Facebook

The above list is not exhaustive.

## 11. Procedures



When investigating a bullying incident, the following procedures will be adopted:

- The victim, alleged perpetrator and witnesses are all interviewed separately
- A room is used that allows for privacy during interviews
- A witness is used for serious incidents
- If appropriate, the alleged perpetrator, the victim and witnesses are asked to record the details of the incident; this may need prompting with questions.
- As appropriate - The Head Teacher will gather evidence of a cyberbullying incident; this may involve text messages, emails, photos, etc. provided by the victim
- Premature assumptions are not made, as it is important not to be judgemental at this stage
- Adults investigating the situation, listen carefully to all accounts, being non-confrontational and not assigning blame until the investigation is complete

## 12. Sanctions/Procedures

If the Head Teacher is satisfied that bullying did take place, the perpetrator will be helped to understand the consequences of their actions and warned that there must be no further incidents. The Head Teacher will inform the perpetrator of the type of sanction/procedure to be used in this instance.

If possible, the Head Teacher will attempt reconciliation and will obtain an apology from the perpetrator. This will either be in writing to the victim, and/or witnesses if appropriate, or face-to-face, but only with the victim's full consent. Discretion will be used here; victims will never feel pressured into a face-to-face meeting with the perpetrator.

Parents are informed of bullying incidents and what action is being taken.

Taking disciplinary action and providing support are not mutually exclusive actions, and should be conducted simultaneously to encourage more positive behaviour in future.

## 13. Support

In the event of bullying, victims will be offered the following support:

- Emotional support and reassurance from the Behaviour Coordinator or Head Teacher
- Reassurance that it was right to report the incident and that appropriate action will be taken
- Advice not to retaliate or reply, but to keep the evidence.
- Advice on aspects of online safety, in the event of cyberbullying, to prevent re-occurrence.

The school will acknowledge that bullying may be an indication of underlying mental health issues. The school will work with the perpetrator regarding any underlying mental health or emotional wellbeing problems.

## 14. Follow-up support

The progress of both the perpetrator and the victim will be monitored. One-on-one sessions to discuss how the victim and perpetrator are progressing may be appropriate.

## 15. Bullying outside of school

Staff will remain aware that bullying can happen both in and outside of school, and will ensure that they understand how to respond to reports of bullying that occurred outside school. Where bullying outside school is reported, it will be investigated and acted upon.

#### Record keeping

The Head Teacher will ensure that robust records are kept with regard to all reported or otherwise uncovered incidents of bullying – this includes recording where decisions have been made, e.g. sanctions, support, escalation of a situation and resolutions.

The Head Teacher will ensure that all decisions and actions recorded are reviewed on a regular basis for the purposes of:

- Identifying patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour.
- Reflecting on whether cases could have been handled better and using these reflections to inform future practice.
- Considering whether there are wider cultural issues at play within the school, e.g. whether school culture facilitates discriminatory bullying by not adequately addressing instances, and planning to mitigate this.
- Considering whether prevention strategies could be strengthened based on any patterns in the cases that arise.

#### 16. Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed every year by the Head Teacher. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

# Bullying Report Form

This form will be sent to the Head Teacher upon completion.

Personal details	
Name of person reporting incident:	
Name of child or adult being bullied:	
How may we contact you? (please circle)	
At school	At home
Home address:	
Email:	
Telephone:	

Incident details
<b>What happened?</b>
<b>Where did the incident take place?</b>
<b>When did the incident occur?</b>

**Who has been suspected of bullying?**

**Did anyone else see the incident?**

**According to the victim, how often does the bullying take place?**

**According to the victim, how long has the bullying been going on?**