



Whitchurch Primary School

Anti-Bullying Policy 2022-2024

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1 STATEMENT OF INTENT

1.1 At Whitchurch Primary School we are committed to providing a supportive, caring and safe environment in which all children are free from the fear of being bullied. As a school, we take bullying and its impact seriously. Bullying of any form is not tolerated in our school, whether the perpetrator be a child or an adult.

1.2 The school will meet its statutory requirement to have an anti bullying policy in place and is also aware of the current legislation that also concerns the prevention of bullying.

The Education Act 2002 Section 175 placed a legal duty on maintained schools and Local Authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

We recognise that some incidents of bullying may also be a child protection issue. A bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection issue under the **Children**

Act 1989 when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. These concerns must be reported to the member of staff in school responsible for child protection and then reported to the local authority's children's social services. **Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006** states that maintained schools must have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. Some schools choose to include this information in an anti-bullying policy, whilst others include it in their behaviour policy. These measures must be communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents. The head teacher must follow through and adopt the policy and all students, parents and teachers should be notified of it once it has been decided.

Under the Public Sector Equality Duty of the Equality Act 2010, schools and childcare providers must take steps to prevent and respond to discriminatory language. Schools have the powers to intervene in bullying incidents outside of the school ground including on home-to-school transport, in the community and online. Most bullying incidents are not crimes. But some types of bullying are illegal and should be reported to the police. This includes bullying that involves violence or assault; theft; harassment and intimidation over a period of time including calling someone names or threatening them, making abusive phone calls, and sending abusive emails or text messages (one incident is not normally enough to get a conviction); and anything involving hate crimes. Some cyberbullying activities could be criminal offences under a range of different laws, including the **Malicious Communications Act 1988** and the **Protection from Harassment Act 1997**. There have been some instances of such prosecutions in the UK.

1.3 To uphold our statutory duties, but more importantly insure that your child feels safe and protected at school, we will ensure that:

- *All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents/guardians 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/guardians will know what the school policy is on bullying and what they can do if bullying occurs.
- *Pupils and parents/guardians will be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

- *Whole school initiatives (staff Inset/CPD, assemblies) and proactive teaching strategies (PSHE lessons) will be used throughout the school to reduce the instances of bullying occurring.
- We recognise that some members of our community may be more vulnerable to bullying and its impact than others; being aware of this helps us to develop effective strategies to prevent bullying from happening and provide appropriate support, if required.
- Reports back to parents/carers regarding concerns on bullying happen quickly and that complaints are dealt with promptly.
- 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.

2. Defining Bullying

2.1 Learning to understand and manage conflict is an important part of growing up. Bullying is not simply a 'falling out'. Research shows that experiencing bullying can have a significant impact on a child's life well into adulthood.

2.2 To ensure we are able to prevent bullying, act quickly when it takes place and avoid misidentifying bullying, it is vital that we have a shared definition of bullying. This should be understood by the whole school community: children, parents/carers, governors and all staff.

2.3 We also recognise that many children and young people will experience conflict in their relationships with other children and young people and as a school we are committed to developing empathy and the skills to manage relationships in a peaceful way that does not harm others.

2.4 The School agrees with the Anti Bullying Alliance's definition of bullying, being:

Bullying is 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.

2.5 Bullying can take a number forms, including:

- **Physical** – pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching etc.
- **Verbal** - name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling.

- **Emotional** – isolating others, tormenting, hiding books, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidating, excluding, manipulation and coercion.
- **Sexual** – unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films etc.
- **Online /cyber** – posting on social media, sharing photos, sending nasty text messages, social exclusion
- **Indirect** - Can include the exploitation of individuals.
- It is important to consider that bullying may also be aimed at individuals because of their:
 - Race, religion, nationality, culture, disabilities or special educational needs, appearance, physical or mental health conditions, sexual orientation or peer on peer.

3. Defining What is *Not* Considered Bullying

3.1 It is often very difficult to explain the difference between what is and is not bullying to a victim as they may have experienced another child not being nice to them. But, it is the repetitive and controlling nature that defines bullying. We have tried to explain some instances which the school would not consider bullying, but would be dealt with as any inappropriate behaviour would be according to our behaviour policy.

- Not liking someone – It is very natural that people do not like everyone around them and, as unpleasant as it may be to know someone does not like you, verbal and non-verbal messages of “I don’t like you” are not acts of bullying.
- Being excluded – Again, it is very natural for people to gather around a group of friends and we cannot be friends with everyone, so it is predictable that when children play a game in the playground, they will sometimes choose to include their friends and exclude others. It is very important to remind children they do the same thing themselves sometimes too and, although exclusion is unpleasant, it is not an act of bullying.
- Accidentally bumping into someone – When people bump into others, the reaction depends mostly on the bumped person’s mood. If they have had a bad day, they think it was an act of aggressive behaviour, but if they are in a good mood, they smile back and accept an apology. This is also relevant for playing sport, like when children are tackled unfairly in football games. It is very important for teachers and parents to explain that some accidents

happen without any bad intention and it is important not to create further conflict, because it was not an act of bullying.

- Making other children play things a certain way – Again, this is very natural behaviour. Wanting things to be done our way is normal and is not an act of bullying. To make sure children do not fall into considering it as an aggressive or “bullying” behaviour, we need to teach them assertiveness and flexibility.
- A *single* act of telling a joke about someone or the expression of unpleasant thought or feeling regarding others . Making fun of other people is not fun for them and can be extremely hurtful, but unless it happens over and over again and done deliberately to hurt someone, it is not bullying.
- Arguments – Arguments are just heated disagreements between two (or more) people (or groups). It is natural that people have different interests and disagree on many things. Some people turn arguments into bullying, because they want to win the argument so much. They use every means to get what they want and find a weakness in the other person, abuse knowledge or trust they have gained and use it against the other person. It is very important to distinguish between natural disagreements and bullying during an argument.
- Isolated acts. Anything that happens once is not considered an act of bullying..

3.2 All the behaviours above are unpleasant and need to be addressed, but they are not to be treated as bullying.

4. Prevention of Bullying

4.1 The school believes that there are 10 key principles to the prevention of bullying:

1. **Listening** - all pupils and parents and carers are listened to and influence strategies and approaches to prevent, report and respond to incidents of bullying.
2. **Inclusion** - all pupils, including those with SEN/Disabilities, are included, valued and participate fully in all aspects of school life.
3. **Respect** - all school staff are role models to others within the school in how they treat others. Pupils are encouraged to respect adults and their peers alike.
4. **Challenge** - we will challenge all forms of discriminatory language

5. **Celebrates Difference** – difference is actively and visibly celebrated and welcomed across the whole school.
6. **Understanding** - all school staff, pupils, governors and parents/carers understand what bullying is and what it isn't.
7. **Believing** - all pupils and their parents and carers are acknowledged, believed and taken seriously when reporting incidents of bullying.
8. **Reporting** - all pupils within the school and their parents and carers understand how to report incidents of bullying.
9. **Taking Action** - we respond quickly to all incidents of bullying. Pupils participate fully in decisions made about them and help to formulate appropriate action to respond to incidents of bullying.
10. **Having Clear Policies** - our school's anti-bullying policy reflects these principles and is embedded within other school policies. They are actively promoted to school staff, pupils and their parents and carers.

4.2 We also encourage the sensible and responsible use of technology and social media, work with staff and outside agencies to educate the children and ensure that we recognise our more vulnerable children and have 'safe spaces' for them to go to when they feel unsettled.

4.3 Further Strategies for the prevention of bullying

- Undertaking regular questionnaires and surveys to monitor the extent of bullying in the school and the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy
- Producing a 'child speak' version of the policy for the children
- Each class agreeing on their own set of class rules or charter
- Making national anti-bullying week a high profile event each year
- Awareness raising through regular anti-bullying assemblies
- PHSE (Personal, Health & Social Education) scheme of work from Reception to Year 6 used to support this policy
- Setting up of a circle of friends support network where a small group of children volunteer to help and support an individual experiencing difficulties
- Children being read stories about the effects of bullying
- Using drama activities and role-plays to help children be more assertive and teach them strategies to help them deal with bullying situations
- Introducing playground improvements and initiatives
- Using praise and rewards to reinforce good behaviour

5. Responding to Accusations of Bullying

5.1 All staff will respond calmly and consistently to all allegations and incidents of bullying. 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 procedure will be used for reporting and responding to bullying allegations or incidents:

- Report all bullying allegations and incidents to staff.
- Staff will make sure the victim(s) are identified, listened to and feel safe.
- Appropriate advice will be given to help the victim(s).
- Staff will listen and speak to all children involved about the incident separately.
- The problem will be identified and possible solutions suggested.
- Staff will attempt to adopt a problem solving approach which will move children on from them having to justify their behaviour.
- Appropriate action will be taken quickly to end the bullying behaviour or threats of bullying.
- Staff will reinforce to the bully that their behaviour is unacceptable.
- The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place and appropriate sanctions applied (see next section).
- If possible, the pupils will be reconciled.
- An attempt will be made, and support given, to help the bully (bullies) understand and change his/her/their behaviour.
- In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staff on the CPOMS platform. All reports will be kept on file online.
- In serious cases, parents will be informed and will be invited to come into school for a meeting to discuss the problem.
- After the incident has been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying behaviours are not repeated.
- Bullying incidents will be discussed regularly at staff meetings.
- Incidents of bullying will be reported to the Safeguarding team of governors to report to full governors at the next meeting.
- If necessary and appropriate, the DSL in school, Social Services or police will be consulted.

5.2 The following sanctions may be used:

(The children have also discussed this question in their classes and some of the sanctions they suggested are included in the list below)

- Apologise to the victim(s) verbally or in writing
- Lose playtimes (stay with class teacher, to do extra work)
- Spend playtimes and lunchtimes with an adult or be asked to play in a restricted area of the playground
- Parents will be invited in to school
- Have a “Behaviour Record Sheet”
- Be removed from class as an internal exclusion
- Report to the Headteacher at break times
- Be withdrawn from participation in school clubs and team events not statutory to the curriculum.
- Fixed term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion

6. Reporting Instances of Bullying

6.1 It is essential that children feel that they can report instances of what they consider is bullying behaviour, either being done to them or that they have witnessed.

6.2 It is beneficial to create a secure environment where ‘telling’ is encouraged. When creating a ‘telling environment’ many young people are often too scared to report bullying, may have received threats from perpetrators about reporting bullying behaviour or see reporting bullying behaviour as ‘snitching’.

6.3 An additional factor for disabled young people and those with SEN might be that some may not fully recognise bullying behaviour because of the nature of their impairment. Young people often state that they are not believed when they do tell.

6.4 Creating an anti- bullying ethos where it’s okay to tell is a crucial first step together with having a number of reporting mechanisms in place.

6.5 In order to ensure disabled children and young and those with SEN feel confident about reporting bullying behaviour we have considered the following:
Having a quiet place to communicate and report the bullying;

- Understanding the child’s communication needs and having communication tools available.
- Have they had time to calm down and fully tell what they want to?

- Do they need a supporter?
- Our children are encouraged to tell their class teacher or any trusted adult about any instances of bullying. If they do not feel that they can talk about it, they are given the option to write it down or draw what they want to communicate.
- We also actively encourage parents to report concerns to us directly either in person, by phone or through email communication.

7. Supporting the Victim

7.1 Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Reassuring the pupil and providing continuous support
- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with their teacher, the head teacher or a member of staff of their choice.
- Being advised to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to concerns and build resilience as appropriate.
- Working towards restoring self-esteem and confidence.
- Providing ongoing support; this may include: working and speaking with staff, offering formal counselling, engaging with parents and carers
- Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance; this could include support through Specialist Children's Services, or support through Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

8. Supporting the Bully

8.1 Pupils who have perpetrated the bullying will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened, establishing the concern and the need to change.
- Informing parents/carers to help change the attitude and behaviour of the child.
- Providing appropriate education and support regarding their behaviour or actions.
- If online, requesting that content be removed and reporting accounts/content to service provider.

- Sanctioning, in line with school behaviour/discipline policy; this may include loss of break, and fixed-term or permanent exclusions.
- Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to
- provide further or specialist advice and guidance; this could include support through Specialist
- Children's Services, or support through Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

9. Links to Other Policies

9.1 This policy links with a number of other school policies including:

- Behaviour policy
- Complaints policy
- Safeguarding & Child protection policy
- Acceptable use policies (AUP)
- E-Safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

This policy will be reviewed every two years.

Status of the policy: Draft

Date Approved by the Governing Body:

Lead contributions from:

Staff: M Chesters

Governors: Curriculum Committee

