Anti-Bullying Policy

Last approved: September 2025
Next review September 2026

Introduction

At Teach Outdoors, we are committed to providing an inclusive, supportive, and safe environment for every child, regardless of their neurodiversity, background, or individual differences. We understand that bullying in any form can undermine the well-being and development of children. As such, we pledge to foster a culture of respect, understanding, and advocacy to ensure every child feels safe, valued, and celebrated.

This policy outlines our stance on bullying and provides guidance on identifying, addressing, and referring bullying concerns to ensure swift and appropriate action is taken.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is any deliberate, harmful, or repetitive behaviour that causes physical or emotional harm to another person. This can include:

- **Physical Bullying**: Hitting, pushing, or other physical aggression.
- **Verbal Bullying**: Name-calling, teasing, or making inappropriate comments.
- **Emotional Bullying**: Excluding someone, spreading rumours, or intimidation.
- **Cyberbullying**: Using digital platforms to harass, threaten, or humiliate.
- **Discrimination-Based Bullying**: Targeting someone based on their neurodiversity, gender, race, religion, disability, or other personal characteristics.

Procedures for Addressing Bullying

We are dedicated to preventing and responding to bullying in a way that upholds the dignity of every child. The following steps will be taken to address incidents of bullying:

1. **Prevention and Awareness**:
    - All staff and volunteers will be trained to recognise signs of bullying and promote a positive, inclusive environment.
    - Children will be educated on kindness, inclusion, and the importance of advocating for themselves and others.
    - Open communication channels will be established, encouraging children to report concerns without fear of retaliation.

2. **Immediate Response**:
    - If bullying is suspected or reported, staff will act promptly to investigate the situation.
    - Children involved will be supported, and any immediate safety concerns will be addressed.
    - The situation will be approached with empathy and respect for all parties involved, with a focus on restoring a safe and supportive environment.

3. **Follow-Up and Consequences**:
    - Consequences for bullying behaviour will be proportionate and focused on reflection and repair.
    - The person who experienced bullying will receive ongoing support, while the person engaging in bullying behaviour will be guided to understand the impact of their actions and how to make amends.

Making a Referral or Passing on a Concern

If anyone, whether a child, parent, volunteer, or staff member, has a concern about bullying or suspects that a child is being bullied, the following process should be followed:

1. **Identify the Concern**: Recognise the signs of bullying or listen to the concerns shared by a child or parent. This may include noticing changes in behaviour, emotional distress, or physical signs of harm.
2. **Report the Concern**:
    - Concerns should be reported immediately to a designated staff member or safeguarding lead.
    - Reports can be made verbally or in writing, and anonymity will be respected if requested.
3. **Initial Response**:
    - The designated staff member will record the details of the concern and begin an investigation promptly.
    - The child involved will be supported and reassured, and any immediate safety risks will be managed.
4. **Referral**:
    - If the situation requires further action, it may be referred to external professionals or agencies, such as local safeguarding authorities.
    - Referrals will be handled with confidentiality, and information will only be shared with relevant individuals to ensure the safety and well-being of the child.
5. **Ongoing Support**:
    - The child who was the target of bullying, as well as any witnesses or those involved, will receive appropriate emotional and social support to recover from the experience.
    - Regular check-ins will ensure that bullying has ceased, and the child feels safe and supported moving forward.

Conclusion

At Teach Outdoors, we strive to create an environment where every child feels safe, accepted, and valued. We take bullying seriously and are committed to addressing it with compassion, fairness, and respect for all involved. Together, we can create a nurturing and positive space where children can grow, learn, and thrive.

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