

# Alverton Primary School



## Anti-Bullying Policy

Policy Reviewed	February 2023
Next Review Date	February 2025
I confirm that this policy has been reviewed and adopted by the Governing Body of Alverton Primary School.	
Chair of Governors	
Date: 9 <sup>th</sup> March 2022	

All forms of bullying are unacceptable in our school.

**The definition of bullying in our school is: “deliberate or conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten an individual or group.”**

The term bullying refers to a range of harmful behaviour, both physical and psychological. Bullying behaviour usually has the following features:

1. It is repetitive and persistent – though sometimes a single incident can have precisely the same impact as persistent behaviour over time, for it can be experienced as part of a continuous pattern and can be extremely threatening and intimidating. This is particularly the case with racist, homophobic/ transphobic, and disablist bullying.
2. It is intentionally harmful – though occasionally the distress it causes is not consciously intended by all of those who are responsible.
3. Bullying behaviour is seen as being “**Several Times on Purpose**”.
4. It involves an imbalance of power, leaving someone feeling helpless to prevent it or put a stop to it.
5. It causes feelings of distress, fear, loneliness and lack of confidence in those who are at the receiving end.

Although one-off incidents can bear many characteristics of bullying, such incidents do not constitute bullying and are defined as incidents of harassment or prejudice. These incidents may be equally serious as incidents of bullying, thus we endeavour to deal with them following the same guidelines.

Bullying does not just occur in childhood but also in adulthood, with similarly serious consequences for all those involved. It is also possible for members of staff to be bullied by the children in their care.

## **Types of Bullying**

Bullying may take various forms, including:

### **Physical**

- Kicking or hitting
- Prodding, pushing or spitting
- Other physical assault
- Intimidating behaviour
- Interference with personal property
- Deliberate targeted exclusion from peer-group activities
- Extortion (eg of pocket money or items in packed lunch)

### **Verbal/Psychological**

- Threats or taunts
- Shunning / ostracism
- Name calling / verbal abuse
- The refusal to acknowledge / respect the cultural / racial/ familial background of an individual.
- The refusal to acknowledge/ respect the sexuality or gender identity of an individual.
- Innuendo
- Spreading of rumours

- Making inappropriate comments in relation to appearance
- Making faces across a room / playground

### **Prejudice-Related Bullying**

We do not tolerate discrimination of others on any grounds including gender, educational need or disability, age, ethnicity, culture, faith or sexual orientation. We ensure that arrangements are in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at all times. We recognise that the school has legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 in respect of safeguarding and in respect of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

Prejudice-related bullying may be experienced through racist, homophobic, disablist or sexist bullying. Further, more specific examples may include:

- Physical, verbal, written, on-line or text abuse or ridicule based on differences of (eg) race, colour, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, physical or sensory ability, religion, learning difficulty, and mental health problems (whether relating to the object of the bullying or relating to a member of their family or a friend);
- Refusal to co-operate with others on the basis of any of the above differences;
- Negative stereotyping on the basis of sexual orientation, race, ability, gender (etc as above);
- Promoting offensive materials such as racist or homophobic leaflets, posters, graffiti, magazines or computer software on school premises;
- Failing to actively discourage such material from within the school community;
- Refusing to use one's chosen moniker or personal pronoun;
- An insistence upon a previously disregarded name or personal pronoun which does not correspond with the presented gender role of any individual;
- Continued association of a word/ term which is primarily used to connote a minority group with negativity or aggression. For instance, calling another child who fouls at football 'gay', or referring to an object as such.

The specific unacceptability of prejudice-related bullying should be explicitly discussed in the classroom.

### **Gifted / Talented**

- Name calling, innuendo or negative peer pressure based on high levels of ability or effort.
- Ostracism resulting from perceptions of high levels of ability.

### **Sexual Harassment and Abuse (including Online)**

We aim to create a culture where sexual harassment and sexual abuse (including online) are not tolerated, and to identify issues and intervene early to better protect children and young people.

We want everyone to feel included, respected and safe in our school. We take all forms of sexual violence and harassment seriously and will not tolerate verbal abuse, which includes name-calling, sexist comments and "banter". Our PSHE / RSE curriculum covers what healthy and respectful behaviour towards one another looks like.

Sexual harassment / abuse / bullying can include:

- Unwanted / inappropriate physical contact
- Sexual innuendo
- Suggestive propositioning
- Exposure to age-inappropriate themes or material
- Distribution / display of pornographic material aimed at an individual
- Graffiti with sexual content aimed at an individual

Any incident of sexual harassment or violence (online or offline) should be reported to the DSL who will follow the full guidance; we will respond to this behaviour as we would to any other breach of our behaviour expectations. We will refer to our Peer on Peer Abuse Policy which includes our procedures for dealing with incidents of sexual harassment and abuse and follows the most recent guidance from KCSIE as well as the advice from the Ofsted Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools and Colleges (June 2021).

### **Online Bullying / Cyber Bullying**

An increasing amount of bullying by school-age pupils is that which can be described as online, or cyber, bullying. Online bullying should be treated like any other form of bullying and the school's Anti-Bullying Policy followed. We recognise that bullying will often have both online and offline elements.

Such incidents can include

- Abuse online or via text message
- Interfering with electronic files
- Deliberate exclusion from online groups, forums or networks
- Undisclosed covert filming or photography of an individual
- Setting up or promoting inappropriate websites
- Inappropriate sharing of images from webcams / mobile phones, etc
- Interfering with e-mail accounts

We aim to deal quickly and efficiently with incidents of cyber-bullying. Children will be encouraged to report any incidents to staff and will be taught not to delete any messages.

Whether reported by a parent or pupil, online bullying will always be treated seriously.

See also our Online Safety Policy and our Behaviour Policy.

### **Actions if incidents of bullying are reported**

The school will where possible seek to:

- Investigate
- Record
- Where bullying is believed to have taken place, the Headteacher should always be informed as a fixed or permanent exclusion may be considered to be the appropriate sanction.
- Take the appropriate action (including communication with parents, class teachers etc) as soon as possible.

**We aim to challenge and prevent bullying through fostering an inclusive and open environment in which difference is celebrated and appreciated. We will not tolerate incidents of bullying or harassment within our school.**

**Bullying will always be taken seriously. Bullying will never be tolerated.**

### **The Effects of Bullying**

The impact and severity of bullying may vary. It is generally perceived as a way of exploiting and manipulating one's own perception of difference. Bullying always makes the victim feel hurt and destroys self-esteem.

Bullying has an equally serious impact on the bully themselves and is often indicative of anxiety or trauma in the history or presentation of the person who bullies.

We understand that it is imperative for bullying to be dealt with in its initial stages. This is because we recognise the potential for serious harm that can occur if bullying is allowed to escalate. Children who have been bullied are at a significantly higher risk of self-harm and suicide. We know that bullying impacts seriously upon school attendance.

The various strategies of our behaviour policy aim to encourage good behaviour and consideration towards others following our Golden Rule of ***"Treat others as you would like to be treated"***. If the behaviour policy is implemented effectively, within an inclusive educational and pastoral environment, there will be few incidents of bullying. We recognise that no school is ever completely void of bullying incidents and our aim is to achieve a minimum of such occurrences which are swiftly and effectively dealt with.

Our behaviour policy promotes a positive whole school approach to behaviour. This is done by:

- enhancing the self-esteem of all members of the school community
- clearly stating the boundaries of acceptable behaviour (rules)
- reinforcing positive habits (rewards)
- encouraging personal responsibility
- developing interpersonal skills
- responding promptly, firmly and consistently to pupils who test those boundaries (sanctions)
- striving to understand that children understand and experience the world in different ways.

### **Strategies for the Prevention of Bullying**

A proactive approach to teaching and learning will help to engage children in learning, build self-esteem and make children part of the school learning team. We provide a curriculum that aims to be of interest to all pupils.

We recognise that the example that is set by adults in their relationships with other adults and with children will have a great effect on the way that children behave towards others.

We raise an awareness of bullying and its effects both on the victim and on the bully through PSHE, assemblies, role play, stories and discussion with individuals.

We aim to build an anti-bullying ethos. This may include direct exploration of bullying-related issues as well as diversity awareness raising work. Such work must be regularly embedded in the general curriculum, in order that such messages are not forgotten and we do not see a repeat of previously demonstrated behaviours.

Assemblies regularly focus on recognising and preventing bullying, empowering children to play an active role in the recognition, prevention and combatting of bullying behaviour.

By raising awareness, we aim to:

- create a culture where bullying is not accepted and does not happen
- encourage those who are bullied to tell an appropriate person
- help individuals cope with bullying
- help individuals to respond to bullying

Our curriculum is inclusive of the legislated strands of equality and, through such inclusion, we encourage open questioning and exploration of each individual self. We believe that by creating such an ethos, bullying is less likely to occur as children are routinely taught that difference of all kinds is something to be embraced and valued. Co-operative behaviour is encouraged.

We ensure that the British Values are embedded within our ethos across the school and celebrate and respect different faiths and beliefs.

Staff have undertaken training in order to raise their awareness of, and knowledge of how best to protect children from, radicalisation and extremism.

The development of caring, supportive and trusting relationships between adults and children will help to prevent incidents of bullying. Members of the school community need to feel confident that reported incidents will be appropriately responded to and will be taken seriously.

Other people within the school also have an important role to play in the prevention of bullying:

- Any person may act to prevent situations which they see arising. Members of the school will be made aware of the important role and responsibilities that they have in spotting inappropriate behaviour or language and in reporting to key members of staff. Children will be taught to report and support individuals who may be being bullied.
- Relevant access to outside agencies and support will be provided where necessary and certain helpline numbers (eg Childline) will be available.

We appreciate that some children find it very difficult to maintain and build appropriate friendships, and we will endeavour to teach such individuals these vital skills.

We will continually evaluate our provision at playtime, in order to encourage appropriate behaviour and build positive relationships during unstructured times.

## **Reporting and Recording Bullying**

Children will be made aware that they must report incidents of bullying towards themselves or others to an adult. Parents will be reminded to report any concerns that they have.

Support staff will be encouraged to refer incidents of bullying to a teacher or the Headteacher.

A postcard system allows children to let an adult know if they are worried that a child is being bullied.

Reports of bullying among staff should be promptly reported to the Headteacher who will act or offer advice accordingly.

Children and parents will be reminded that all reports of bullying will be listened to, investigated and, if necessary, acted on according to our policy.

It is essential that all bullying incidents of a phobic / racist / disablist nature are recorded in writing immediately in accordance with guidance provided by the Equality and Diversity Service. A copy of any such report must be given to the Headteacher.

We record all incidents of bullying and keep a Serious Behaviour Log which includes incidents of bullying. Details are reported each term to the governing body.

## **Responding to Bullying – Children who exhibit bullying behaviour**

If bullying does occur, all child / children exhibiting such behaviour will be made aware that bullying will not be tolerated.

Key points in our response to bullying will be:

- never to ignore reported or suspected bullying
- not to make assumptions or come across towards a victim as judgemental
- to listen carefully to all accounts (sometimes a written account will be more revealing)
- to adopt a problem solving, pro-active approach
- to follow up repeatedly

The response will depend on the severity of the incident. The response may include:

- discussion between adult and children involved
- questioning of all individuals involved, including any possible witnesses to try and establish an objective viewpoint of what has happened.
- note-taking and record keeping where appropriate.
- a problem-solving approach, where children find their own solution through discussion with a teacher present, if this is considered appropriate by the victim.
- class discussion in circle time (no names)

**It is important that the victim has the opportunity to speak individually with an adult, without other children present.** We believe that **all** children, regardless of the apparent actions, have the right to be heard and to explain their 'side of the story' without any kind of pre-judgement. Therefore, it is vital that staff do not make judgements of any kind about children until an appropriate process has been undertaken and as many facts established as possible.

If bullying persists further strategies will be adopted:

- sanctions as those listed in our behaviour policy
- discussion with parents, both to inform parents and to find a way forward together
- involvement of external agencies
- part time or temporary exclusion
- permanent exclusion (as a last resort, after all other routes have failed or as a response to an incident of extreme severity)

We must remember that for a child who uses bullying behaviour this can often be the only identity in which they feel comfortable and secure. Such children can often wish to be more socially acceptable models, but can find it is increasingly difficult to step away from their position as 'the bully'. We must ensure that this myth of identity is not perpetuated by staff or by children. When incidents of bullying have occurred, we must support all those involved. This should include allow each child ways in which to adopt a more successful and purposeful role and identity within the school community.

### **Responding to Bullying – Supporting children who experience bullying**

Children must be made aware that they will be supported and taken seriously if they report bullying.

Children should be made aware that they do not 'deserve' to be bullied. We will endeavour to teach the children a variety of anti-bullying techniques which they can use in key situations and to reinforce the individual self-esteem and self-worth of children at all times.

### **Bullying amongst Staff**

We recognise the seriousness of bullying in the workplace and the impact that this can have on whole-school relationships, morale and productivity. We cannot best support the children if the staff team is not working together as a team. We aim to support individuals who may be experiencing such bullying at work, and would endeavour to help them find ways to tackle bullying behaviour. This may include additional training, removal of staff from certain environments, or reassertion of job descriptions and roles. Bullying among the staff body should be immediately reported to the Headteacher. If informal resolutions are unsuccessful, the formal disciplinary procedures will be actioned.

We recognise that such bullying among adults often manifests as seemingly negligible, low-level psychological incidents, rather than more overt, physical bullying. We would encourage staff to remember that such repeated incidents do constitute bullying and should be dealt with, even if they appear comparatively minor.

It is important that we clearly give the message that anyone can be a victim of bullying and that our school is one that treasures and embraces all differences and abilities.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Adults at school all have a part to play in preventing and responding to bullying.

If adults become aware of bullying they must respond or refer the matter on to a teacher or the Headteacher who will respond.



Children must be made aware that they should report all incidents of bullying to an adult. This is their part of the responsibility to confront bullying together.

Adults at school must also be vigilant for signs of bullying that has not been reported. The victim may show signs including absence, anxiety, pains, and sadness.

### **Involving Outside Agencies**

When strategies within school have little effect, or when additional support would be beneficial, outside agencies may be involved. This may also be used to raise awareness of general bullying issues or to gain specific input on prejudice or phobic/ racist bullying. Such groups will also be approached to provide staff training as necessary.

### **Bullying Outside of the School Premises**

The school is not directly responsible for bullying outside of the school premises; however, we do have a responsibility to do all within our power to ensure that children are safe on the journey to and from school. We aim to influence children's attitudes to help to decrease incidents of our pupils bullying outside of school.

Pupils will be encouraged to tell an adult, family member or teacher, if they are bullied outside of school. Steps taken might include:

- discussion with parents of bully or victim
- talking to the local police
- talking to pupils about how to handle bullying outside of the school's premises

### **Implementing the Policy**

The response to bullying needs to be consistent as set out in this policy. Everyone needs to be aware that:

- bullying will not be tolerated
- bullying should be reported
- bullying will be responded to.

Staff and pupils will need regular reminders of the policy over time to ensure that it is remembered.

### **Dealing with Racist Behaviour**

In line with the school's aims at Alverton Primary School we are working to create an ethos of respect for ourselves and those around us, and therefore harassment of any kind will not be tolerated.

Sanctions will be determined in line with the agreed Formal Sanctions Procedure, and will be determined by the nature of the harassment.

Any racism will be reported to the Headteacher and a report made on My Concern.

The Headteacher will then act in accordance with the LA Guidelines on Racial Harassment. Reporting forms are included in the appendices of this document. For a full copy of the LA guidance please follow this link:

<https://old.cornwall.gov.uk/school-messenger-home/pupil-support/equality-and-diversity/equality-and-diversity-incidents-and-hate-crime-in-schools-online-reporting-form/>

### **Useful Contacts**

**Equality and Diversity Service** 01872 323628 [csf.equalityanddiversity@cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:csf.equalityanddiversity@cornwall.gov.uk)

**Anti-Bullying Cornwall** 0800 5875991 [abc@vscornwall.org](mailto:abc@vscornwall.org)

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Behaviour Policy (February 2022).