

GOSFORTH GROUP

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

General Statement

The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 requires maintained schools to have an Anti Bullying Policy.

The Trustees value the good relationships fostered by the schools and expects that every allegation of bullying will be taken seriously. The issues surrounding bullying, for both victim and perpetrator, are complex and therefore should be investigated fully. We aim to be a trust where all students feel confident to tell staff about their worries and concerns and we promote a positive social environment in which all children and young people feel valued and respected.

All staff, pupils and parents should be aware of the negative effects that bullying can have on individuals and the school in general, and should work towards ensuring that pupils can work in an environment without fear.

Bullying is unacceptable in this trust and will not be tolerated. The trust also recognises that because of the verdicts in bullying cases it must take note of bullying perpetrated outside school which spills over into the school. The trust will do what is reasonably practicable to eliminate any such bullying.

AIMS

- to raise awareness of, and define bullying as well as gain an understanding as to why children bully;
- to demonstrate that the trust takes bullying seriously and that it will not be tolerated;
- to take measures to prevent all forms of bullying in the schools and on off-site activities;
- to support everyone in the actions to identify and protect those who might be bullied;
- to demonstrate to all that the safety and happiness of pupils is enhanced by dealing positively with bullying;
- to promote an environment where it is **not** an offence to tell someone about bullying; or
- to promote positive attitudes in pupils (including assertiveness training).

Definition of Bullying

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.

Vulnerable pupils are more likely to be the targets of bullying due to the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves. Vulnerable pupils may include, but are not limited to:

- Pupils who are adopted.
- Pupils suffering from a health problem.
- Pupils with caring responsibilities.
- Pupils from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Pupils with certain characteristics are also more likely to be targets of bullying, including, but not limited to:

- Pupils who are LGBTQ+, or perceived to be LGBTQ+.
- Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) pupils.
- Pupils with SEND.

Types of bullying

Many kinds of behaviour can be considered bullying, and bullying can be related to almost anything. Teasing another pupil because of their appearance, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, home life, culture, or SEND are some of the types of bullying that can occur.

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.

Responsibilities

Trustees and Academy Advisors

The 'nominated Academy Advisory Group member' will liaise with the Chair, the Principal and 'designated teacher' over all anti-bullying strategies, and individual cases where appropriate.

The Trustees will discuss, review and endorse agreed strategies on the initiative of the 'nominated AAG member', and in any case will discuss with the Principal an annual report on the working of this policy.

The Principal

The Principal has a legal duty under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to draw up procedures to prevent bullying among pupils.

The Principal will:

- ensure that all staff have an opportunity of discussing strategies and reviewing them;
- determine the strategies and procedures;
- discuss development of the strategies with the Leadership Group
- ensure appropriate training is available;
- ensure that the procedures are brought to the attention of all staff, parents and pupils; and
- report annually to the Trustees.

Pastoral Lead will:

- be responsible for the day-to-day management of the policy and systems;
- ensure that there are positive strategies and procedures in place to help both the bullied and bullies;
- keep the informed of incidents;
- arrange relevant staff training;
- determine how best to involve parents in the solution of individual problems; and
- make a termly report to the Principal.
- act as designated safeguarding lead.

Pastoral Staff will:

- be responsible for ensuring that the school's positive strategies are put into practice; and
- know the school's procedure and deal with any incidents that are reported.

Main School

Form Tutors/Tutors will:

- be responsible for liaising with (Pastoral Team Leaders, Assistant Principal/ Pastoral Lead, Subject/Department Leaders) over all incidents involving pupils in their form;
- be involved in any agreed strategy to achieve a solution; and
- take part in the anti-bullying programme in the PSHE and Citizenship course.

All Staff will:

- know the policy and procedures;
- be observant and to ask pupils what is happening to them;
- deal with incidents according to the policy; and
- never let any incidence of bullying pass by unreported, whether on-site or during an off-site activity.

Parents are responsible for:

- Informing their child's head of year or form tutor if they have any concerns that their child is the victim of bullying or involving in bullying in anyway.
- Being watchful of their child's behaviour, attitude and characteristics and informing the relevant staff members of any changes.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Informing a member of staff if they witness bullying or are a victim of bullying.
- Not making counter-threats if they are victims of bullying.
- Walking away from dangerous situations and avoiding involving other pupils in incidents.
- Keeping evidence of cyberbullying and informing a member of staff should they fall victim to cyberbullying.

Prevention

Anti-Bullying Education in the Curriculum

The school will raise the awareness of the anti-social nature of bullying through the PSHE and Citizenship programme, school assemblies, the school council, use of tutorial time and in the national curriculum programmes of study as appropriate.

- the Curriculum Lead is responsible for initiating and developing with appropriate colleagues an anti-bullying programme as part of the PSHE and Citizenship course; and
- Subject/Department Leaders are responsible for introducing anti-bullying material in their programmes of study as appropriate.

Changing the attitude and behaviour of bullies will play a major part in the strategies used by the school.

The curriculum will explore and discuss issues at age-appropriate stages such as:

- Healthy and respectful relationships.
- Boundaries and consent.
- Stereotyping, prejudice and equality.
- Body confidence and self-esteem.
- How to recognise abusive relationships and coercive control.
- Harmful sexual behaviour, the concepts involved and why they are always unacceptable, and the laws relating to it.

Procedures

How is bullying shown?

It can be:

- physical;
- verbal;
- social or psychological;
- cyber bullying; and
- often an inter-relationship between classes/groups.

Staff will encourage pupil cooperation and the development of interpersonal skills using group and pair work. Diversity, difference and respect for others will be promoted and celebrated through various lessons. Opportunities to extend friendship groups and interactive skills will be provided through participation in special events, e.g. drama productions, sporting activities and cultural groups.

Seating plans will be organised and altered in a way that prevents instances of bullying. Potential victims of bullying will be placed in working groups with other pupils who do not abuse or take advantage of others.

A safe place, supervised by a teacher, will be available for pupils to go to during free time if they feel threatened or wish to be alone. The teacher supervising the area will speak to pupils to find out the cause of any problems and, ultimately, stop any form of bullying taking place.

Signs of Bullying

Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, e.g. becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be changes in work patterns, a lack of concentration, or truancy.

All staff should be aware of these possibilities and to report promptly any suspicions of bullying to the Pastoral Lead/Assistant Principal, Pastoral Team Leaders or Subject/Department Leaders.

Pupils will be encouraged to report incidents of bullying.

Form Tutors and PSHE teachers will include anti-bullying training in their programmes.

Child-on-child abuse

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

To prevent child-on-child abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, the school will educate pupils about abuse, its forms, and the importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others through the curriculum, assemblies and PSHE lessons, in line with the Prevention section of this policy.

All staff will:

- Be aware that pupils of any age and gender are capable of abusing their peers.
- Be aware that abuse can occur inside and outside of school settings.
- Be aware of the scale of harassment or abuse, and that just because it is not being reported does not mean it is not happening.
- Take all instances of child-on-child abuse equally seriously regardless of the characteristics of the perpetrators or victims.
- Never tolerate abuse as “banter” or “part of growing up”, and will never justify sexual harassment, e.g. as “boys being boys”, as this can foster a culture of unacceptable behaviours and one that risks normalising abuse.
- Be aware that child-on-child abuse can be manifested in many ways, including sexting, sexual harassment and assault, and hazing or initiation-type violence.
- Always challenge any harmful physical behaviour that is sexual in nature, such as inappropriate touching. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

Sexual harassment in particular can take many forms, including but not limited to:

- Telling sexual stories, making sexual remarks, or calling someone sexualised names.
- Sexual “jokes” or taunting.
- Deliberately brushing against someone.
- Displaying images or video of a sexual nature.
- Upskirting (this is a criminal offence).
- Online sexual harassment, e.g. creating or sharing sexual imagery, sexual comments on social media, or sexual coercion or threats.

Pupils will be made aware of how to raise concerns or make a report and how any reports will be handled – this includes the process for reporting concerns about friends or peers. If a pupil has been harmed, is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral may be made to children’s social care services (CSCS) and potentially the police, where the DSL deems this appropriate in the circumstances.

All staff will be aware and sensitive towards the fact that pupils may not be ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused. Pupils being abused may feel embarrassed, humiliated, scared, or threatened.

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 pupils, 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

NB. The above list is not exhaustive, and cyberbullying may take other forms.

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to cyberbullying. The school views cyberbullying with the same severity as any other form of bullying and will follow the sanctions set out in this policy if they become aware of any incidents.

All members of staff will receive training on the signs of cyberbullying, in order to identify pupils who may be experiencing issues and intervene effectively.

Many of the signs of cyberbullying will be similar to those found in the 'Signs of bullying' section of this policy; however, staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a pupil is being cyberbullied:

- Avoiding use of the computer
- Being on their phone routinely
- Becoming agitated when receiving calls or text messages

Staff will also be alert to the following signs which may indicate that a pupil is cyberbullying others:

- Avoiding using the computer or turning off the screen when someone is near
- Acting in a secretive manner when using the computer or mobile phone
- Spending excessive amounts of time on the computer or mobile phone
- Becoming upset or angry when the computer or mobile phone is taken away

Staff will be aware that a cyberbullying incident might include features different to other forms of bullying, prompting a particular response. Significant differences may include the following:

- **Possible extensive scale and scope** – pupils may be bullied on multiple platforms and using multiple different methods that are made possible by virtue of the bullying taking place online
- **The anytime and anywhere nature of cyberbullying** – pupils may not have an escape from the torment when they are at home due to the bullying continuing through technology at all times
- **The person being bullied might not know who the perpetrator is** – it is easy for individuals to remain anonymous online and on social media, and pupils may be bullied by someone who is concealing their own identity
- **The perpetrator might not realise that their actions are bullying** – sometimes, the culture of social media, and the inability to see the impact that words are having on someone, may lead to pupils crossing boundaries without realising

- **The victim of the bullying may have evidence of what has happened** – pupils may have taken screenshots of bullying, or there may be a digital footprint that can identify the perpetrator

Staff and pupils will be instructed not to respond or retaliate to cyberbullying incidents. Evidence of the incident should be recorded, e.g. taking screenshots. Staff will report incidents to their line manager or the Principal for the incident to be investigated and support to be provided. Pupils will report incidents to a trusted member of staff.

Where offensive content is posted online targeting a staff member or pupil, the person targeted will be encouraged to use the reporting mechanism on the website or social media platform to request its removal. Where the person who has posted it is known to the school, the Principal will request they remove it directly.

The school will support pupils who have been victims of cyberbullying by holding formal and informal discussions with the pupil about their feelings and whether the bullying has stopped, in accordance with this policy.

In accordance with the Education Act 2011, the school has the right to examine and delete files from pupils' personal devices, e.g. mobile phones, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone.

Dealing with Incidents

- if bullying is suspected or reported the incident will be investigated and dealt with initially and immediately by the teacher approached;
- if a racial element to the bullying is suspected the (Principal/Pastoral Lead must be informed immediately;
- the teacher will record the details of the incident and inform the appropriate pastoral team member;
- the pastoral team member will interview all the parties and make a record;
- staff teaching the bullied pupil will be informed;
- the pastoral team member will determine in consultation with the Pastoral Team Leader or Pastoral Lead Assistant Principal the appropriate strategy and plan of action to combat the bullying;
- parents will be kept informed by the pastoral manager;
- any sanctions against the bullies will be determined in line with the behaviour policy.

The Victims

Staff who deal with pupils who have been bullied must always offer reassurance. Pupils who have been bullied will be given support determined by the pastoral manager in consultation with the pupil. In some cases, - if appropriate, 'no-blame' anti-bullying work may take place with the victim's permission.

The Alleged Perpetrators

Changing the attitude and behaviour of alleged perpetrators will be part of the responsibility of the positive procedures used by the school. However, the school recognises that sanctions will also have to be used against bullies. Refer to above.

Sanctions

Any of the school's formal punishments can be used against perpetrators as appropriate. For persistent offenders or incidents considered as gross acts of aggression a pupil could be permanently excluded.

Involvement of Parents

Parents, as well as all staff and pupils, should know that the school will not tolerate bullying, and takes a positive approach to educating pupils to combat it.

Parents of pupils who are victims and parents of the perpetrators will be involved in the solution to the problem as appropriate by the relevant pastoral manager or tutor in consultation with the appropriate Assistant Director or Learning Manager.

Parents will be informed of the policy and procedures and the possibility of permanent exclusion following gross acts of bullying.

Involvement of Pupils/Students

Pupils will be involved in the positive strategies through both the school council and forms/tutor groups. Pupils will have an input into the PSHE anti-bullying programme, and will be consulted on how it could be developed.

A major part of the programme will consist of educating pupils in how to cope with bullying.

Strategies for Dealing with Bullying

Useful advice can be found in the DCFS non-statutory guidance **Bullying – Don't Suffer in Silence – An Anti-Bullying Pack for Schools (64/2000)**. The pack gives guidance on whole-school policies, pupils' experiences, finding out about bullying in school, strategies to combat bullying, working with parents, beyond the classroom, and advice for pupils, parents and families, along with case studies and advice on materials.

OFSTED has also published a report on bullying in schools - **Bullying: Effective Action in Secondary Schools HMI 465** - following a survey of secondary schools and LAs. It includes pupils' accounts of bullying and their views on how it might have been prevented. It offers advice to secondary schools on how to set about tackling bullying.

Websites to help victims: www.kidscape.org.uk www.youngminds.org.uk

Criteria for Success

Monitoring of the effectiveness of the policy will be by Assistant Principal/Pastoral Lead and Pastoral Team Leaders who will record bullying incidents on CPOMS and submit feedback to the Principal.

Counselling

The school is prepared in appropriate cases to arrange counselling for both bullies and the bullied. Kidscape gives advice on child safety policy, runs a Helpline for parents - Tel: 020 7823 5430 and organises free one-day sessions for bullied children.

Reporting and Recording

All incidents must be reported and recorded using the school's CPOMS System.

Staff Training

The CPD Lead is responsible for arranging a programme of staff development, which will include anti-bullying strategies. This will include training for education support staff and LAG members as well as teachers.

Monitoring and Review

The Pastoral Lead will keep and consider reports on serious incidents, and make a termly report, with statistics, to the Principal. The Principal will consider the reports with the Leadership Group to determine what can be learned from the incidents and how they were handled with a view to improving the school's strategies.

The Principal will make an annual report to the Academy Advisory Group.

Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Executive Director of Curriculum and Performance and the DSLs. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

APPROVED by the Board of Trustees on 19 October 2023