

The Bellbird Primary School



Anti-Bullying Policy

July, 2022

(To be reviewed Summer 2024)

Introduction

At The Bellbird Primary School, we aim to provide a safe, caring and friendly environment for learning for all our pupils to allow them to improve their life chances and help them maximise their potential and soar to success.

This includes encouraging open discussion around differences between people and celebrating diversity. We recognise that a school has a responsibility to have an understanding of the community they serve and to respond to identified concerns including proactively teaching children about potential threats to their health and safety. We will therefore adopt a contextual approach to bullying and peer on peer abuse, working with families and outside agencies where appropriate.

We expect all pupils to act safely and feel safe in school, including that they understand the issues relating to all forms of bullying and that they feel confident to seek support from school should they feel they or others are unsafe. We would also want parents/carers to feel confident that their children are safe and cared for in school and that incidents, if/when they do arise, are dealt with promptly and effectively.

The school is aware of its legal obligations including the Equality Act 2010. This means as well as taking into account the context of any concerns which need addressing, we will consider where a pupil may have a protected characteristic. Having a protected characteristic means you have a right not to be treated less favourably, or subjected to an unfair disadvantage, by reason of that characteristic, for example, because of your age, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation. This will include ensuring any action taken by the school has taken into account their needs and that any actions taken by the school do not put the pupil at greater harm.

Our Shared Beliefs about Bullying

Bullying damages children's and young people's physical and mental health, including their self-confidence and ability to build and sustain relationships. It can also destroy self-esteem sometimes with devastating consequences and with the effects lasting into adult life. Bullying undermines the ability to concentrate and learn and can impact on children's and young people's chances of achieving their full potential at school and later in life.

Bullying causes harm to those who bully, those who are bullied and those who observe bullying. This school believes that all children and young people have the right to learn and work in an environment where they feel safe and that is free from harassment and bullying.

The purpose of this policy is to communicate how the school aims to create a climate and school environment in which everyone agrees that bullying is unacceptable and is committed to tackling it to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is a subjective experience that can take many forms. Various national and international definitions of bullying exist and most of these definitions have three things in common which reflect children's experience of bullying and evidence gained from extensive research in this area.

The three common aspects in most definitions of bullying are that:

- It is deliberately hurtful behaviour
- It is repeated over time
- There is an imbalance of power, which makes it hard for those being bullied to defend themselves.

These factors are reflected in the DfE and Cambridgeshire CFA Services definitions of bullying:

‘Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally’ DfE, 2011

‘Behaviour by an individual or group, often repeated over time, that intentionally harms another individual or group either physically or emotionally. It involves an imbalance of power, which makes it hard for those being bullied to defend themselves.’ Cambridgeshire CFA Services, 2016

At The Bellbird Primary School, we define bullying as:

‘The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or through cyberspace.’

Behaviour often associated with bullying

Baiting

Baiting can be used in bullying both on and offline. It can be used to bully someone to get a ‘rise’ out of them and it can be used to antagonise those who might be bullying others to get them to bully. Sometimes baiting is used secretly to try and get a person to explode in a rage or react negatively or loudly so that they get into trouble.

Banter

The dictionary describes banter as ‘the playful and friendly exchange of teasing remarks’ Bullying is often justified as being just banter. It may start as banter, but some types of banter are bullying and need to be addressed as bullying.

Types of Banter

- Friendly Banter – There’s no intention to hurt and everyone knows its limit
- Ignorant Banter – crosses the line with no intention to hurt, will often say sorry
- Malicious Banter – done to humiliate a person – often in public

Peer on Peer Bullying

This can include but is not limited to:

- Bullying including cyberbullying
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Physical abuse
- Sexting
- Initiation/hazing, violence and rituals

Sexist and sexual bullying

Sexual Harassment – unwanted contact of a sexual nature which can occur on and offline. This behaviour is considered to violate a child’s dignity and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Occasionally an incident may be deemed to be bullying even if the behaviour has not been repeated or persistent - if it fulfils all other descriptions of bullying. This possibility should be considered, particularly in cases of hate crime related to bullying and cyberbullying and peer on peer abuse. If the target or alleged perpetrator might be in danger then intervention is urgently required including a safeguarding referral.

What does bullying look like?

Bullying behaviour can represent itself in a number of different forms. Children and young people can be bullied in ways that are:

- **Physical** – by being punched, pushed or hurt; made to give up money or belongings; having property, clothes or belongings damaged; being forced to do something they don't want to do.
- **Verbal** – by being teased in a nasty way; called gay (whether or not it's true); insulted about their race, religion or culture; called names in other ways or having offensive comments directed at them.
- **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** – for example, via text message; via instant messenger services and social network sites; via email; and via images or videos posted on the internet or spread via mobile phones.
- **Indirect** – can include the exploitation of individuals such as false friendships, criminal exploitation, sexual exploitation and radicalisation as well as having nasty stories told about them; being left out, ignored or excluded from groups.

Although bullying can occur between individuals it can often take place in the presence (virtually or physically) of others who become 'bystanders' or 'accessories'.

Bullying can take place between:

- Young people
- Young people and staff
- Between staff
- Individuals or groups of people

Prejudice Related Bullying

The school recognises that although anyone can be bullied for almost any reason or difference, some CYP (Children and Young People) may be more vulnerable to bullying than others. Research has identified various different types of bullying experienced by particular vulnerable groups of children and young people.

These include:

- Bullying related to race, religion or culture
- Bullying related to special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities
- Bullying related to being gifted or talented
- Bullying related to appearance or health conditions
- Bullying related to sexual orientation
- Bullying of young carers or looked-after children or otherwise related to home circumstances
- Sexist, sexual or transphobic bullying.

As part of the requirement on school to promote British Values, school must proactively challenge derogatory and discriminatory language and behaviour including that which is racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disablist in nature. We will record these types of bullying, even that which represents a one-off accident.

Prejudice Related Language

Racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disablist language includes terms of abuse used towards people because of their race/ethnicity/nationality; because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or are perceived to be, or have a parent/carer, sibling, or friend who is: because they have a learning or physical disability. Such language is generally used to refer to something or someone as inferior. This may also be used to taunt young people who are perceived to be different in some way or their friends, family members or their parents/carers are perceived to be different.

In the case of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language particularly, dismissing it as banter is not helpful as even if these terms are not referring to a person's sexual orientation or gender identity they are using the terms to mean inferior, bad, broken or wrong.

We will challenge the use of prejudice related language in our school even if it appears to be being used without any intent. Persistent use of prejudice related language and/or bullying will be dealt with as with any other form of bullying. In addition to school level recording, incidents of prejudice related bullying will also be logged anonymously with the local authority's PrfE (Prejudice Reporting for Education) system to supporting tracking of incidents at school and county level.

Where does bullying take place?

Bullying is not confined to the school premises. It also persists outside school, on the journey to and from school and in the local community and may continue into Further Education. The school acknowledges its responsibilities to support families if bullying occurs off the premises although it can not deal with incidents out of school directly.

Cyberbullying

The increasing use of digital technology and the internet has also provided new and particularly intrusive ways for bullies to reach their victims. Cyberbullying can take many forms and bullying online can often start in school and then be progressed online or start online and influence the behaviour in school.

Whilst most incidents of Cyberbullying occur outside school we will offer support and guidance to parents/carers and their children who experience online bullying and will treat Cyberbullying with the same severity as any other form of bullying.

Cyberbullying can include:

- Hacking into someone's accounts/sites
- Posting prejudice/hate messages
- Impersonating someone online
- Public posting of images
- Exclusion
- Threats and Manipulation
- Stalking

We will ensure that our children are taught safe ways to use the internet (see our online safety policy) and encourage good online behaviour.

Recognising Signs and Symptoms of bullying

The school recognises the fact that some children are more vulnerable to bullying than others and is sensitive to the changes of behaviour that may indicate that a child or young person is being bullied. Children who are being bullied may demonstrate physical, emotional and behavioural problems. The following physical signs and behaviour could indicate other problems but bullying will be considered as a possibility:

- Being frightened of walking to or from school
- Losing self confidence and self-esteem
- Being frightened to say what's wrong
- Developing unexplained cuts, bruises and other injuries
- Unwilling to go to school, development of school phobia and unusual patterns of non-attendance
- Failing to achieve potential in school work
- Becoming withdrawn, nervous and losing concentration
- Becoming isolated and disengaged from other CYP
- Developing changes in physical behaviour such as stuttering and nervous ticks
- Regularly having books or clothes destroyed
- Having possessions go 'missing' or 'lost' including packed lunch and money
- Starting to steal money (to pay the perpetrator)
- Becoming easily distressed, disruptive or aggressive
- Developing problems with eating and food
- Running away
- Developing sleep problems and having nightmares
- Developing suicidal thoughts or attempting suicide.

Where children are exhibiting extreme signs of distress and changes in behaviour, the school will liaise with parents/carers and where appropriate, relevant health professionals and agencies such as the school nurse/G.P. and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

Recognising reasons why children may bully

The school recognises the fact that children may bully for a variety of reasons. Recognising why children bully, supports the school in identifying children who are at risk of engaging with this type of behaviour. This enables the school to intervene at an early stage to prevent the likelihood of bullying occurring and to respond promptly to incidents of bullying as they occur. Understanding the emotional health and wellbeing of children who bully, is key to selecting the right responsive strategies and to engaging the right external support.

Possible reasons why some children may engage in bullying include:

- Struggling to cope with a difficult personal situation e.g. bereavement, changes in family circumstances
- Liking the feeling of power and using bullying behaviour to get their own way
- Having a temperament that may be aggressive, quick tempered or jealous
- Having been abused or bullied in some way
- Feeling frustrated, insecure, inadequate, humiliated

- Finding it difficult to socialise and make friends
- Being overly self-orientated and finding it difficult to empathise with the needs of others
- Being unable to resist negative peer pressure
- Being under pressure to succeed at all costs.

Procedure

Reporting Incidents of Bullying

The school encourages and equips the whole school community to report all incidents of bullying, including children who have experienced being bullied and bystanders who have witnessed an incident. School staff should record these incidents on my concern making clear who the victim(s) and perpetrator(s) of bullying are in each case.

The school endeavours to provide clear, accessible and confidential incident reporting systems, which include access to:

- Teaching and support staff who will listen
- Designated staff for safeguarding
- Family Support worker signposting for families where needed
- Wellbeing provision
- Direct contact between parents, children and staff

Procedure

All reported incidents will be taken seriously and investigated involving all parties. The staff of the school are aware of and follow the same procedures by:

- Informing parents of any child's possible involvement in an incident
- Listening carefully to all parties including target, bully and all others involved
- Consider the context of the individual cases including any protected characteristics for target and victim and how this may influence any actions taken
- Implementing appropriate disciplinary sanctions in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.

The response of the school will also vary according to the type of bullying and is graded according to the seriousness of the incident but send out a message that bullying is unacceptable at The Bellbird Primary School. These actions include a range of follow-up responses and support appropriate to the situation for all involved such as:

- solution focused, restorative approach, circle of friends, individual work with victim, perpetrator, bystanders and others affected by the bullying, referral to outside agencies if appropriate
- Liaising with the wider community if the bullying is taking place off the school premises i.e. in the case of Cyberbullying or hate crime.
- Following up, in particular keeping in touch with the person who reported the situation, parents/carers
- Having a clear complaints procedure for parents/carers who are not satisfied with the school's actions
- Liaise with the DSL if there are any safeguarding issues to consider – who may refer to MASH

Strategies for preventing bullying

The school believes that the whole school community should work together to reduce bullying as part of our efforts to promote a positive and inclusive whole school ethos and create a safe, healthy and stimulating environment.

As part of the ongoing commitment to the safety and welfare of our pupils, we at The Bellbird Primary School, have developed the following strategies to promote positive behaviour, discourage bullying behaviour and raise the profile of what bullying is and how we can help others:

- Ensuring that the school actively promotes the celebration of difference and diversity as part of their core values
- Anti-Bullying and Safer Internet Day promotion
- PSHE/RSE lesson weekly and themes included in contextualised plans
- School Council work
- Specific curriculum input on areas of concern – as appropriate
- School and class values displayed prominently
- Peer support systems such as utilising buddies for new pupils and across year groups R and 6
- Social skills and friendship skills groups for vulnerable individuals and groups through our wellbeing provision
- Transition work to support children moving across year groups and key stages

Working with Parents /Carers

Where the school has become aware of a bullying situation, parents/carers of the child/young person who is being bullied will be invited to the school to discuss their child's situation.

The school will endeavour to involve parents/carers of children who have been bullied constructively at an early stage to support the process of working together to find ways of resolving the situation and bringing about reconciliation. The school will work alongside those parents/carers whose children have been bullied to support them in developing their children's coping strategies and assertiveness skills where appropriate.

The school takes parents/carers reporting bullying seriously. Parents/carers are initially encouraged to refer their concerns to the class teacher. More senior members of staff will be involved where appropriate. Parents/carers are encouraged to note details of the incident to share with the class teacher. Again, a record of the incident and the agreed actions/response made at the meeting will be recorded by the school on my concern. The school will discuss the possible responsive options with the parents/carers and the bullied child and agree on a way forward.

Where the school's Positive Behaviour strategies have failed to modify the behaviour of a perpetrator and the bullying is continuing or when sanctions are to be used, the parents/carers of the perpetrator will be invited to the school to discuss their child's behaviour further. The outcome of the meeting and agreed actions/responses will be recorded by the school on my concern.

The school adopts a problem solving approach with parents/carers when dealing with alleged incidents of bullying.

While the school firmly believes that all bullying is unacceptable and that the perpetrators should be made to accept responsibility for their behaviour and make amends, the school understands that a cooperative ethos is desirable when trying to reach a resolution that is effective and long lasting. Parents/carers of those causing the bullying will also have support to come to a balanced view of what is happening and appreciate their role in helping their children to learn about the consequences of their actions and adopt alternative ways of behaving.

The school ensures that staff and all parents/carers remain fully aware of the measures that have been put into place to prevent the occurrence of further incidents. Follow up appointments are made with parents/carers to share these agreed measures and to monitor their success in preventing further bullying.

Whole Staff Awareness and Training Opportunities

The school endeavours to ensure that teachers and other adults working with children are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to identify and address all types and forms of bullying effectively and safely. Training will include recognising the signs of bullying in children and how to identify vulnerable children who may be susceptible to being bullied or becoming actively involved in bullying and bullying type behaviour.

Training for staff is provided to ensure that they feel competent and confident in appropriately challenging bullying. Training also provides staff with a clear understanding of the school's policy and procedures on preventing and responding to incidents of bullying, including providing short and long term support to those affected by bullying. The school's approach to anti-bullying work is included within induction programmes for new staff.

Monitoring and Evaluating the Anti-Bullying Policy

The school's Anti-Bullying Policy and practice is regularly monitored and evaluated to ensure its effectiveness. This process includes reviewing the school's definition of bullying and identifying new types and forms of bullying as they emerge. The Policy review is coordinated by the Headteachers and involves monitoring and evaluating anti-bullying preventative and responsive strategies to ensure the school's practice is effective and successful in fostering an ethos that inhibits bullying and promotes inclusion and respect for diversity. The results of any review are used to inform areas for school development, which are included in the School Development Plan and other appropriate action plans.

Related policies: Positive Behaviour Policy, Inclusion policy