

Plumtree School

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Legal Status:

- Complies with Part 3, paragraph 10 of The Education (Independent School Standards Compliance Record) (England) (Amendment) Regulations.
- *Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for Head Teachers, staff and governing bodies*: DfE Guidance (July 2017): and the relevant aspects of *Safe to Learn, embedding anti-bullying work in schools*.
- *Supporting children and young people who are bullied: advice for schools*: DfE Guidance (March 2014).
Cyberbullying: advice for Head Teachers and school staff: (November 2014).
Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying: (November 2014)
- Has regard to the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Has regard to *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) Information for all school and college staff* (DfE: September 2024);
- *Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges* (2021)

Applies to:

- the whole school inclusive of activities outside of the normal school hours including online;
- all staff (teaching and support staff), the proprietor and volunteers working in the school.

Availability:

This policy is made available to parents, carers, staff and pupils from the school office and website

Monitoring and Review:

This policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Head Teacher.

The Proprietors will undertake a formal annual review of this policy for the purpose of monitoring and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than one year from the date shown below, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

Signed:

Date: May 2025

Phil Simpson
Head Teacher

Principles - Aims and Objectives

At Plumtree School we seek to create a culture in which bullying of any kind, either against pupils or adults is not accepted by any member of the school community. Bullying of any kind can threaten both the mental health and educational progress of our pupils. Plumtree School enables all members of the school community to understand what constitutes bullying. We make it clear to pupils, staff and parents that bullying is completely unacceptable. We strongly believe, as part of our behaviour policy, that our pupils have the right to study in a safe, supportive and secure environment, free from physical threats, verbal taunts and any form of harassment. Incidents of bullying threaten this and cause enormous stress to victims. We are therefore strongly committed to the avoidance of bullying in all its forms. We provide a clear framework for dealing with incidents of bullying, ensuring that bullies are

dealt with swiftly and firmly. Our straightforward procedures make it easy to report bullying, including cyber bullying and bullying inside and outside of school. Therefore, if bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell, and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. All adult members of our school community should be vigilant in recognising that bullying is taking place, and deal with it thoroughly and with sensitivity. Our aim is to promote positive relationships amongst all members of the school community and to develop a culture in which individuals are listened to and their concerns taken seriously. Records are kept to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach or to enable patterns to be identified.

We believe that the principle means of prevention is through the maintenance of conditions where bullying is less likely to flourish and is more easily detected. All pupils are known to us personally and it is therefore easier for us to detect signs of possible distress. Moreover, we feel that it is important that pupils have free and informal access to the Head Teacher and other staff. This can be seen in the procedures we adopt. However, a formal anti-bullying policy is of utmost importance. We aim to promote a transparency in human relationships so that children, by default, are held to account for the feelings they may evoke in others. This policy applies to all Plumtree School activities both on and away from the school campus. In the event of bullying taking place among the staff, the Head Teacher should be informed and appropriate decisions made with possible reference to the relevant school Employment Policies and Procedures. Accusations of bullying of a pupil (pupils) by members of staff will be investigated thoroughly. Each pupil is treated fairly and with respect. Members of staff to whom disclosures are made should initiate the following procedures themselves and/or consult with the relevant staff as appropriate. All disclosures, whether from a pupil, a parent, a member of staff or a volunteer should be taken seriously and treated with sensitivity. The victim(s) should be made aware that their safety is considered to be of paramount importance.

We are a *TELLING School*. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff. Posters identifying key members of staff to talk to are displayed around school. All adult members of our school community should be vigilant to recognise where bullying is taking place, and deal with it thoroughly and with sensitivity. Records are kept to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach or to enable patterns to be identified.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying can be defined as a deliberate, unprovoked and usually repeated (over time) action to intentionally humiliate, threaten, frighten or hurt an individual or group physically or emotionally. It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion and belief, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability (as defined in the *Equality Act 2010*), or because a child is adopted or is a carer. It may occur directly or through cyber-technology such as social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email. Initiation or similar ceremonies are not allowed. Bullying can occur through several types of anti-social behaviour. A feature of bullying in schools is that its existence is not always immediately known or suspected by those in authority. The recognition that bullying can be defined as usually repeated (over time) actions does not mean that the school does not take seriously a single incident. Single incidents are logged on CPOMS and action taken to deal with it as per this and the Behaviour policy. This will assist the school to spot patterns and to ensure the single incident does not become the first of a series. The school recognises the seriousness of both physical and emotional bullying in causing psychological damage and even suicide. Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal act in the UK, some types of harassing or threatening behaviour or communications could be a criminal offence. If our staff consider that an offence may have been committed, we will seek assistance from the police. As part of our Behaviour Policy Plumtree School believes that all children and adults have the right to live in a supportive, caring environment in which pupils feel safe and free from bullying and harassment that may include cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying related to special educational need, sexual orientation, sex, race, religion and belief, culture, gender reassignment or disability (as defined in the *Equality Act 2010*), adoption, being a carer and the use of discriminatory language. Bullying on the basis of protected characteristics is taken particularly seriously. These will be identified on CPOMS and enable school to monitor our success in meeting standards such as instilling values of tolerance and respect and actively promoting the well-being of pupils.

Bullying can be:

Emotional (indirect bullying) including isolation of others by a refusal to co-operate with them and exclusion - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures), deliberately excluding from social groups or an activity by refusal to sit next to/ talk to/ work/ co-operate with others and refusal to follow staff instructions to do the above, or malicious rumours, e-mails or text messages, and also exclusion from play/discussions etc. with those whom they believe to be their friends.

Physical harm or its threat including the abuse of personal property – jostling, serious fighting, pushing, kicking, hitting, taking or hiding belongings, punching or any use of violence; deliberately destroying or damaging work or possessions or removing personal property, use of weapons/threatening use of weapon (or any object which could be used as a weapon), intimidation through physical gestures and actions.

Cyber – not occurring face to face but rather through electronic means including, but not limited to, social networking sites, gaming, internet sites, email, instant messaging, by mobile phone including through text messages and phone calls, photographs both real and manipulated and so on.

Racist - Bullying directed at individuals of a certain race, culture, ethnicity, language, faith, community, national origin or national status. The distinctive feature of racist bullying is that the victim is attacked not as an individual but as the representative of a family, community or group. This is an area where schools are required to keep statistics about incidents.

Cultural – focusing on and/or playing off perceived cultural differences or similar.

Sex/Gender – covers a wide range of behaviour from name calling to physical assault. It is the use of sexual language or negative stereotyping on the basis of gender.

Sexual - is inappropriate physical contact or sexual innuendo/banter.

Homophobic - This is bullying which is directed towards people who are openly gay, bisexual, are perceived as gay, or show characteristics. Heterosexual young people subject to homophobic bullying are less reluctant to report it as this may enforce the stereotypical way that they are already viewed by others so sensitivity and positive support is required for victims.

Religious – Attacking faith, belief, religious practice or custom.

Special Educational Needs and Disability – remarking upon, drawing attention to, or discriminating against persons with physical disabilities or learning difficulties or other identified special educational needs such as emotional and behavioural disabilities (EBD) and Specific Learning Difficulties (SLD)

Adopted – bullying focused on the child being adopted

Carer – bullying directed at a child who plays the role of a carer within their family

Verbal - Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, making snide comments, teasing, humiliating others, threatening others, inciting others to humiliate and threaten others.

Written – Spreading rumours, writing or printing unkind or malicious on paper.

Bullying can take place between pupil and pupil, staff and staff and staff and pupil. We consider the pastoral care of the pupils and staff to be of prime importance. In class, this role largely rests with the class teacher. It is school policy that any misdemeanour will be dealt with by the member of staff present when it occurs, whether in the playground, classroom, cloakroom or any part of the school. A common code of behaviour is expected from everyone at Plumtree School (see Behaviour Policy). All staff and volunteers at Plumtree School are expected to treat each other with a professional level of respect. The term 'bullying' is commonly associated with acts of violence but non-physical bullying is experienced by many pupils at some period during their school career. We believe that all children and staff should be able to work and play without any fear of being bullied by any other person. Bullying is not tolerated and all accusations are to be taken seriously and dealt with. Bullying can take place between pupil and pupil, staff and staff and staff and pupil. We consider the pastoral care of the staff and children to be of prime importance. In class this role largely rests with the class teacher. It is school policy that any misdemeanour will be dealt with by the member of staff present when it occurs, whether in the playground, classroom, cloakroom or any part of the school. A common code of behaviour is expected from everyone in the school (see Behaviour Policy). All staff and volunteers at our school are expected to treat each other with a professional level of respect.

Signs of Bullying and Staff Awareness

The term 'bullying' is commonly associated with acts of violence, but non-physical bullying is experienced by most pupils at some period. All staff must be alert to the signs of bullying. These may include:

- Unwillingness and reluctance to return to school, displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet with signs of distress and low esteem;
- failure to produce work, or unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others, excuses for work not done and books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing, or are damaged;
- a change in established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary) psychological damage, unexplained tearfulness; and diminished levels of self-confidence;
- frequent complaints of symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches and so on;
- a pattern of minor illnesses and health problems, unexplained cuts and bruises, health problems, frequent absences, erratic attendance and late arrivals to class along with excuses for work not done;
- choosing the company of adults;
- missing property;
- being afraid to use the internet or mobile phone, is nervous and jumpy when a cyber-message is received;
- starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact, difficulty in sleeping, experiences nightmares;
- talking of suicide or running away and
- verbal taunting and pupils sitting on their own or being left out of activity groups during lessons or play activities and gives improbable excuses for any of the above.

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers.

Strategies

We will work to prevent and eliminate any form of bullying by:

- promoting good behaviour and positive relationships based on mutual respect. making pupils fully aware of the school's policy through, for example, a list of expectations;
- ensuring pupils understand that if they have been bullied or have witnessed bullying, they should tell a member of staff, their parents or any helpful adult or friend;
- promoting anti-bullying using educational elements such as our scheme for Personal, Social, Health, Economic education (PSHE) education assemblies, circle time, projects, drama, stories, literature, with discussion of differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice based language;
- developing Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning throughout Plumtree School and the curriculum;
- informing parents by various means of the school's anti-bullying policy whilst encouraging them to support it;
- providing counselling and help for victims of bullies and for bullies themselves ;
- imposing reasonable, proportionate and consistent sanctions as and when necessary;
- developing initiatives to raise awareness of the negative impact of bullying by any member of our community such as an anti-bullying assembly and peer mentoring;
- familiarising all staff at Plumtree School with the anti-bullying policy through In-Service training and Professional Development to ensure it is applied consistently and fairly and by showing respect for all members of the school community, they act as good role models for pupils.

Plumtree School's Anti-bullying Policy is dovetailed with the Behaviour Management Policy (with support for the victim and the bully) and makes it clear what the sanctions are for bullying. At Plumtree School we implement disciplinary sanctions that reflect the seriousness of an incident and convey a deterrent effect. If necessary, strong sanctions, such as exclusion, would be used in cases of severe and persistent bullying. It is incumbent on Plumtree School to have clear policies that are communicated to parents, pupils and staff, along with creating an environment of good behaviour and respect, with helpful examples set by staff and older pupils inclusive of the celebration of

success. Integral to our policy is involving parents and making sure pupils are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders. Handling of a bullying incident is given much thought to ensure that the facts are fully known, agreed and understood by the bully/ies and the victim(s). Bullying instances are reported and recorded so that patterns can be identified. Children are encouraged to share their concerns with the adults responsible for them. Staff will consult with the Head Teacher or other senior manager knowing that their response will be sympathetic and appropriate.

The Role of the Staff

The ethos and working philosophy of Plumtree School means that all staff actively support children to have respect for each other and for other people's property. Kind and polite behaviour is regularly acknowledged and rewarded. Children are actively involved in the prevention of bullying. School rules are apparent in all classes and support our commitment to anti-bullying practice.

All the staff in our school take all forms of bullying seriously, and seek to prevent it from taking place.

All staff need to be aware of any obvious or subtle hurtful conduct in lessons.

Procedures

It is important that all staff be alert to early signs of distress in pupils. If a member of staff witnesses a bullying incident, in any form, or is approached by a pupil about bullying, they should investigate the incident without delay according to the agreed procedures that are as follows:

- Pupils should be reminded of the standards of behaviour expected.
- The teacher will investigate the incident and see the pupil/s involved. The Head Teacher should be kept informed of any instances of bullying and will liaise with the DSL/DDSL as appropriate to identify cases of peer-on-peer abuse requiring a MASH/police referral as per the Safeguarding Policy.
- A bullying incident will be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. The Head Teacher and/or DSL will be informed with urgency.
- Parents will always be informed if their child has been found to be either a victim or a perpetrator of a bullying incident.
- Victims, alleged bullies and witnesses should be interviewed separately by the teacher first involved and, if able, are required to write down independent accounts of the incidents/situations. In the course of this procedure enquiries should be made to ascertain whether or not the alleged bully has been involved in similar incidents involving this or other pupils, thus enabling patterns of behaviour to be established.
- If bullying is of a serious nature, or recurrent or persistent the Head Teacher should be informed as a matter of urgency.
- The school will continue to monitor the wellbeing of the victim and the behaviour of the bully. Meet with the victim on the review date to determine whether the bully/ies have stopped their behaviour. If the bullying has stopped comment favourably to the bully, inform staff that the problem has stopped. Inform the Head Teacher if the bullying has continued. The Head Teacher will then take appropriate action.
- It should always be acknowledged that on rare occasions some pupils set themselves up as victims, and the reasons for this should be thoroughly investigated and appropriate support given.
- In the course of this procedure enquiries should be made to ascertain whether or not the alleged bully has been involved in similar incidents involving this or other pupils, thus enabling patterns of behaviour to be established.

Staff should:

- be continually aware, watchful and available, promoting good behaviour and encourage the care of others;
- ensure pupils are appropriately supervised and report all cases of bullying to the Head Teacher.

Staff Training

We raise awareness of staff through training, so that the principles of the anti-bullying policy are understood, action is defined to resolve and prevent problems and sources of support are available. Where appropriate we can invest in

specialised skills to understand the needs of the pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) pupils

Cyber-bullying Preventative Measures

In accordance with legislative requirements we have a whole school approach to e-safety with responsibility the role of the proprietors, Head Teacher and DSL. All Staff are responsible for ensuring that online safety is considered with regards to Safeguarding responsibilities, annual safeguarding training includes online safety. We expect all pupils to adhere to internet Safety SMART rules as displayed in classrooms and taught in lessons. Personal mobile phones and devices allowing pupils access to the internet are not allowed in school. All internet access for pupils is via laptops which have filtered internet access, virus protection and monitored use. Internet searches are only accessed via Swiggle. Staff are vigilant with regards to E-safety within lessons and adhere to the Safeguarding Policy at all times. School devices are to be used when teaching lessons benefiting from online access whether staff, pupils or visitors are using. Pupils and visitors must always seek permission from an appropriate member of staff before making use of a school device and their use should be monitored by staff at all times. Should a pupil make use of a school device without permission or for a purpose that is inappropriate that action will be taken by the member of staff in line with the Behaviour policy or in the case of concerns of radicalisation or abuse with regard to the Safeguarding policy. Appropriate filters, virus protection and monitors are in place to safeguard children from inappropriate content and alert school to safeguarding concerns. All staff should report any issues or concerns with technology to the Proprietors/Head Teacher/DSL/DDSL so that they can be acted upon as appropriate.

Safer Internet Day each year increases awareness for staff, pupils and parents of the importance of being aware of the positives and negatives offered by online provision in addition to continuous teaching and education provision. Emails and policies keep parents informed of the importance of online safety and provide links to more detailed information to increase knowledge. Children are encouraged to apply the school values and rules to their behaviour online as well as in person, in order to develop resilience and protect themselves and others. All personal data online is managed in line with statutory requirements.

The Procedures for Pupils

Pupils are encouraged to tell anybody they trust if they are being bullied, and if the bullying continues, they must keep on letting people know. Pupils are invited to tell us their views about a range of school issues, including bullying, in various pupil questionnaires.

For children who are being bullied - Remember bullies thrive on silence

- If you are being bullied tell someone, preferably a trusted adult
- If you can, write down everything that has been said or done to hurt you. Be careful only to write down things that have really happened.
- Do not blame yourself – it is not your fault
- Make friends or stay around others
- If worried, stay near a playground lady or school mentor at break
- Expensive items and large sums of money should be left at home
- Try not to show you are upset
- Try to ignore it at the time of the incident - stay calm - walk away to safety.

For children who see someone being bullied

- If you see someone being bullied or in distress ACT. Watching or doing nothing can suggest support of the bully.
- Tell an adult immediately
- Try to be a friend to the person who is being bullied
- Ask if they feel they can talk to someone. If they won't talk to someone and you are worried about them, go to a trusted adult.
- Never join in with a bully – physically, verbally or by isolating another child

For children who are using bullying behaviour

- Recognise that your behaviour is seen as bullying – physically, verbally, or by isolating; this is wrong and can have a long lasting effect on others.
- Even if you think that bullying is just a laugh, children who are bullied and those who care for them, feel very scared and/or upset.
- If you are angry and upset about something, talk about it with a trusted friend or adult, instead of taking it out on someone else.
- A bully doesn't have many true friends.
- Change your bullying behaviour straightaway and become a 'hero' not a 'baddie'
Speak to an adult about your bullying behaviour.

Involvement of Parents/Carers/Guardians (including clear policies communicated to parents)

We have clear policies communicated to parents, pupils and staff to create a helpful environment of integrity and respect. This will be achieved through staff members communicating with parents regularly and setting a good example for the pupils. Through the involvement of parents the school aims to show pupils the part they can play in preventing and dealing with bullying. Parents have a responsibility to:

- Support the school's anti-bullying policy, actively encouraging their child to be a positive member of the school.
- Contact their child's class teacher immediately if they are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying.
- Contact the Head Teacher if they are not satisfied that their concerns have not been dealt with appropriately. Parents will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.
- Allow the school to resolve the problem with the bully/ies and their parents.
- Encourage their child to behave responsibly and punctually on entering and leaving the school site. The school strongly urges parents not to incite their child to defend themselves through the use of inappropriate language or behaviour.
- Be aware that bullies have often been victims themselves.
- In the case of cyber bullying, e.g messages online, gaming chat rooms, emails & texts, photographs, social media pupils should be encouraged to keep a record of the date and time of any offensive message(s), save it and bring it to a trusted adult.

Action should then be taken with regard to each of the following:

Advice and support for the victim is in accordance with the school's behaviour management policy. Sanctions imposed will be relative to the age of the child. These are recorded on CPOMS (see Behaviour Policy) to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach adopted or to enable patterns to be identified. The bully must understand what they have done and why the sanctions are being applied. Support for the bully is in accordance with the school's behaviour management policy. Giving general information to all staff, through daily staff briefing and staff meetings, of incidents of bullying, mentioning the type of incident and the individuals involved.

The above process and sanctions should impress on the person instigating any act of bullying that: their action is totally unacceptable; it is meant as a deterrent to enabling repeat behaviour and it is a signal to other members of the community that bullying is not tolerated.

The threshold for reporting a bullying issue to external agencies (such as police/children's social care) including cyber-bullying and bullying outside school, is if a child is regarded as likely to suffer significant harm or that a child is suffering substantially and this cannot be resolved quickly and positively. Records are kept to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach adopted or to enable patterns to be identified. A bullying incident is treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

Prevention

Plumtree School uses the following methods for helping pupils to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- the school rules through circle time, (PSHE) education and citizenship activities along with assembly;
- social stories and drawings about bullying;
- reading stories about bullying or having them read to a class or assembly;
- making up role-plays; and
- providing emotional support to give each child the opportunity to express how they feel.

Methods:

- We watch for early signs of distress in children.
- We listen, believe act and give reassurance when a child(ren) communicates that they are being bullied.
- We intervene to stop the child who is bullying from harming the other child or children.
- We help and explain to the child doing the bullying why his or her behaviour is unacceptable.

Appreciating the Seriousness of Bullying

Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Bullying children need to learn different ways of behaving. The School has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying. Children who bully must face sanctions, which are outlined in our Behaviour Policy. The sanctions might include apologising to the victim or, in extreme circumstances, exclusion.

Pupils' Response to Bullying

Pupils mainly respond to bullying behaviour in one of four ways. They can:

- actively encourage the bullying behaviour
- passively support the bullying behaviour
- passively reject the bullying behaviour
- actively challenge the bullying behaviour

Classroom Management

Teachers' classroom management will link strongly to the School Behaviour Policy. This includes a positive ethos with emphasis on the dignity of each pupil, on praise and reward, rather than punishment. The skills of self-discipline must be learnt early in life. All pupils will know that their teacher is the person to whom they can talk in confidence. Pupils will be given the opportunity in class to discuss bullying and how to deal with it. Pupils will be encouraged to discuss how they get on with others and how to form positive attitudes towards them. This includes a review of what friendship really is and how to treat everyone with dignity and respect. Teachers will be aware that they can radically affect the incidence of bullying and that it must always be taken seriously.

Playground Management

The staff on duty should be patrolling the playground areas and constantly monitoring the behaviour of pupils. In the case of minor misbehaviour – a pupil will be given the chance to apologise to the victim – this may stop the situation getting out of hand. The supervisors on duty will report bullying to the Head Teacher/ DSL/DDSL, who in turn, will act in accordance with the agreed policy. All staff will be aware that they can radically affect the incidence of bullying and that it must always be taken seriously.

Bullying will not be tolerated

Remember we are a TELLING SCHOOL

