



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Approved by the Headteacher: April 2022
Review Date: April 2025

Introduction

At Wickham Church of England Primary School, we aim to provide a safe, caring and friendly environment for learning. This includes encouraging open discussion around differences between people, challenging prejudice and celebrating diversity. We recognise that a school has a responsibility to understand 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 pupils to act safely and to feel safe in school, as reflected in our school rules of 'Ready, Respectful, Safe'. We also expect pupils to 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 that, as well as considering the context of any concerns which need addressing, we will consider where a pupil may have a protected characteristic. This will include ensuring any action taken by the school reflects their needs and that any actions taken by the school do not put the pupil at greater harm.

This policy is available on the school website and from the school office. The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in our school is Mr Cutter, Headteacher. The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are Mrs Loren Way, Mrs Vicki Woods and Mrs Ruth Proost. Safeguarding is the responsibility of all; however all staff, parents and pupils need to be aware of to whom and how they should report any safeguarding concerns. The anti-bullying co-ordinators are the PSHE Lead, Mrs Rachel Holmes, and the Deputy Head, Mrs Loren Way.

The responsibilities are:

- Policy development and review involving pupils, staff, governors, parents/carers and relevant local agencies;

- Implementing the policy and monitoring and assessing its effectiveness in practice;
- Ensuring evaluation takes place and that this informs policy review;
- Managing bullying incidents;
- Managing the reporting and recording of bullying incidents;
- Assessing and coordinating training and support for staff and parents/carers where appropriate;
- Coordinating strategies for preventing bullying behaviour.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined 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 to react negatively/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.

Peer on Peer Abuse: All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as peer-on-peer abuse). This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to: Bullying (including cyberbullying); Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; Sexual violence; Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse; Upskirting; Sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals. We will challenge and respond to any concerns related to the above.

Occasionally, an incident may be deemed to be bullying - even if the behaviour has not been repeated or is not persistent – if it fulfils all other descriptions of bullying. This possibility should be considered, particularly in cases of hate crime related 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 be:

- Physical – pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching etc.
- Verbal - name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling.
- 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 – posting on social media, sharing photos, sending nasty text messages, social exclusion.
- Indirect - Can include the exploitation of individuals such as false friendships, criminal exploitation, sexual exploitation and radicalization.

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

- young people;
- young people and staff;
- between staff;
- individuals or groups.

Prejudice Related Bullying

Under the Equalities Act 2010 it is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of:

- age;
- being or becoming a trans person;
- being married or in a civil partnership;
- being pregnant or having a child;
- disability;
- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, including Gypsy, Roma, Traveller heritage;
- religion, belief or lack of religion/belief;
- sex /gender;
- sexual orientation.

These are called 'protected characteristics'. As part of the requirement on schools to promote fundamental British values, schools 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 incident.

Other Vulnerable Groups

Other vulnerable groups include:

- young carers;
- looked after children;
- bullying related to home circumstances;
- bullying related to appearance or health.

Although the above do not currently receive protection under the Equality Act 2010, bullying for these reasons is just as serious.

There is no hierarchy of bullying - all forms should be taken equally seriously and dealt with appropriately.

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, or trans, or are perceived to be, or have a parent/carer, sibling, or friend who is; or 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. Dismissing such language as banter is not helpful as it is being used 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.

Hate Crime and Bullying

There is no legal definition of a hate crime. However, the police and the CPS (Crown Prosecution Service) have an agreed definition of hate crime as: "Any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's race or perceived race; religion or perceived religion; sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation; disability or perceived disability and any crime motivated by hostility or prejudice against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender."

There is a distinction between a hate crime and a hate incident. "A hate incident is any incident which the victim, or anyone else, thinks is based on someone's prejudice towards them because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or because they are transgender." However, a hate incident does not necessarily break the law. Where a hate incident amounts to a criminal offence and is based on one of the five protected characteristics, it is known as a hate crime. The type of conduct which will be considered as a hate incident is wide ranging and includes the following:

- verbal abuse;
- harassment;
- bullying or intimidation;
- physical attacks;
- threats of violence;
- hoax calls, abusive phone or text messages, hate mail;
- online abuse;
- displaying or circulating discriminatory literature or posters;
- graffiti;
- arson;

- throwing rubbish in a garden; and
- malicious complaints.

Any concerns about hate incidents/crimes should be discussed with a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Information on how to report a hate crime can be found at <https://www.report-it.org.uk/home>.

Children can report any crime anonymously at <https://www.fearless.org/>.

Where Does Bullying Take Place?

Bullying is not confined to the school premises and may persist outside school, in the local community and on the journey to and from school. The school acknowledges its responsibilities to support families if bullying occurs off the premises.

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 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 on line;
- 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 we will encourage good online behaviour.

Reporting and Responding to Bullying

Our school has clear systems to report bullying for the whole school community (including staff, parents/carers, children and young people). This includes those individuals who are the victims of bullying or have witnessed bullying behaviour (bystanders).

Parents/Carers: concerns should be reported to any adult in school who will notify the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team. This communication may be verbal or written.

Children are encouraged to: speak to an adult in school/their parents/use the worry monster. A list of 'who we can talk to' was created in classes and can be seen on the 'Ready, Respectful, Safe' board.

All staff and visitors are aware of the need to take all concerns seriously and to ensure that nurturing relationships encourage information sharing.

Procedures

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

- Staff members completing an incident log, using CPOMS (Child Protection Online Management System);
- Interviewing all parties;
- Informing parents;
- Implementing appropriate disciplinary sanctions in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy (these are graded according to the seriousness of the incident and send out a message that bullying is unacceptable);
- Being clear that responses may also vary according to the type of bullying and may involve other agencies, where appropriate;
- Following up - We will keep in touch with the person who reported the situation, which may be parents/carers or other adults.

We have a clear complaints procedure for parents who are not satisfied with the school's actions. This is available online or from the school office.

We will use a range of responses and support appropriate to the situation. These may include solution-focused approaches, restorative approach, circle of friends, ELSA support, individual work with the victim, perpetrator and bystanders or referral to outside agencies if appropriate. If the DSL deems there are any safeguarding issues to consider, we may refer on to the MASH (Multi-Agency Support Hub).

As part of our ongoing commitment to the safety and welfare of our pupils, we have developed the following strategies to promote positive behaviour and discourage bullying behaviour:

1. Curriculum/Whole-School Strategies:

- Ensuring that the school actively promotes the celebration of difference and diversity as part of their core values;
- RSHE/PSHE lessons and cross curriculum themes including work on challenging prejudice-related language and behaviour and challenging unconscious bias;
- Celebration events;
- Anti-Bullying Week annually in November;
- Specific curriculum input on areas of concern such as Cyberbullying and internet safety;
- Pupil Voice;
- Playground Buddying;
- Visits from external agencies (e.g. NSPCC etc);
- Modelling of positive relationships;
- Staff and young people are actively encouraged and supported to challenge prejudice related behaviour relating to all protected characteristics and vulnerable groups;
- Ensuring that images and materials used reflect all groups in British society.

2. Reactive programmes for vulnerable groups or groups involved in bullying:
 - Counselling and/or mediation schemes from trained staff and outside agencies including ELSA;
 - Small group work;
 - Restorative Justice.
3. Support for parents/carers:
 - Parent information distributed by School newsletters, the school website and social media etc
 - Information available on parents' evenings
 - Information sessions e.g. e-safety
4. Support for all school staff
 - Staff training and development for all staff including those involved in lunchtime and before and after school activities;
 - Encouraging all staff to model expected behaviour;
 - Staff training around curriculum delivery of RSHE related curriculum areas.

Support information:

Mencap – www.mencap.org. Mencap is a learning disability charity that provides information and support to children and adults with a learning disability, and to their families and carers.

Stonewall – www.stonewall.org.uk. Stonewall is the lesbian, gay and bisexual charity.

Educational Action Challenging Homophobia (EACH) – www.eachaction.org.uk. Educational Action Challenging Homophobia (EACH) is a charity and training agency helping people and organisations affected by homophobia.

School's Out – www.schools-out.org.uk.

Beatbullying – www.beatbullying.org.uk. Beatbullying is the leading bullying prevention charity in the UK and provides anti-bullying resources, information, advice and support for young people, parents and professionals affected by bullying.

Childnet International – www.childnet-int.org.

Safe to Learn - DCSF Guidelines.

Embedding anti-bullying work in schools – DCSF-00656-2007.

Homophobic bullying – DCSF – 00668-2007.

Cyberbullying – DCSF – 00658-2007.

Bullying Involving Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities – DCSF 00372- 2008.